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MILLICENT;

OR,

THE TRIALS OF LIFE.

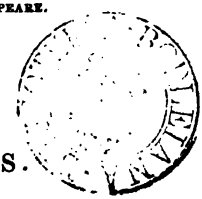
BY

THE AUTHOR OF

"THE CURATE OF OVERTON."

"There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them as we will."

SHAKSPEARE.



IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MILLICENT.

CHAPTER I.

'Hath he forgotten me? The wrongful thought
Would stir within her, and though still repell'd
With shame and self-reproaches, would recur.'

SOUTHEY.

MILLICENT felt quite stunned and stupified by this unjust treatment—oh, why was she obliged to leave Staplehurst, now it had become so dear to her, and just at a time when she had every reason to desire to remain?—she continued where she had been standing throughout that stormy interview, with her

eyes fixed on the glittering gold before her, wondering why her lot in life should be so hard, when the breakfast bell rang, and Millicent, frightened and bewildered, hurried up the back stairs to her own room to commence her packing. Her tears flowed fast as she took her things down from the wardrobe where they had been for so many months; recollections of past pleasure filled her mind, and as she folded the pretty white dress, Kate had given her, she longed for her dear friend's advice and consolation—her white crape bonnet reminded her of the consecration, that happy day when Lord Fortescue had sat by her side, looking so beautiful, and yet so sad, in his calm devotion—here, she folded up a dress she had worn in one of their happy forest rambles, and there, she found some relics of their pleasant walking parties—and it was with tears and sobs she placed the impressions of the brasses they had rubbed at Westworth in her portfolio, and feeling perfectly heart-broken, she wished again, and again for a letter from Lord For-

tescue; she was a little cheered when she thought that he must return soon to the Chase, and then he would come to Heatherton, and she would be happy again!—Poor Millicent, how she prayed for his return, as she stooped over her boxes and thought how unjustly she had been treated; and how young she was to be without any one to counsel her!—A knock at the door startled her, she jumped up from the floor, thinking immediately of Mrs. Robertson, but it was only Sarah with some breakfast.

"Oh, Miss Thornville," said the girl; "I am so sorry you are going, it has always been such a pleasure to wait upon you; and indeed, we are all sorry, except Benson, and she is a good-for-nothing thing—but, dear Miss, do have some coffee, and let me fold those things; I can do it in no time;" and the kind-hearted Sarah, persuading Millicent to take some breakfast, began to pack her boxes, expressing her regrets all the while at Millicent's leaving.

The packing took a long time, there was so much to collect together, so that it was

nearly eleven when she descended to the school-room, which looked rather dismantled without her numerous drawings and books. Millicent had not been there two minutes, before Mr. Robertson came in with a troubled expression on his good humoured countenance.

"Miss Thornville," he began; "I feel quite concerned about all that has happened this morning; I am really ashamed of your being sent home in this unceremonious way—are you sure it is not inconvenient, because, I can counter-order the carriage directly?"

"Oh, no, thank you," said Millicent, sadly; "I have all my things ready."

"Well, I am very sorry your sojourn at Staplehurst should have terminated so unfortunately; Tom, poor fellow, would have said no more about it, but Mrs. Robertson got put out,—it is a pity," he added, smiling, "that you ladies cannot agree; I do not think you ought to have anything to do with one another, but leave all little affairs to the gentlemen to settle for you; but I am sure we all have to

thank you for improving the children so much; it has seemed quite a different house since you have been here; Fanny is not like the same girl, and if it had rested with me, you should have remained here as long as you pleased, but ladies will have their own way, and Mrs. Robertson is not different from the rest, I suppose."

"Perhaps it is best as it is," replied Millicent, scarcely knowing what to say; "but yet, I am sorry to go. I have been very happy at Staplehurst this summer; Miss Robertson, and indeed, every one was very good to me."

"And you deserved it, Miss Thornville, for there is not a better young lady in Christendom; only send the next person who wants you for a governess to me, and you shall see what a good character I will give you! But where are you going, back to Heatherton?"

"Yes," replied Millicent, "Mrs. Lucas, an old servant of ours, will receive me, I know."

"But, Miss Thornville," said Mr. Robertson, "she will not be able to keep you, though I

suppose you will not have any difficulty in finding another situation; but still, of course, there must be expenses which you will not like to entail on Mrs. Lucas, so might I beg as a favour, your acceptance of a cheque for fifty pounds, and if at any time you require money or other assistance, only let me know, and I will do everything in my power to serve you," and Mr. Robertson pulled out his pocket-book.

"Indeed, you are very kind," Millicent answered hurriedly; "but I shall not, I assure you, require your kind present; Mrs. Lucas will be quite able to take care of me, she is very well off, and has a comfortable cottage of her own,—but if I should be at all in any difficulty at a future period, I will certainly avail myself of your most generous offer."

Mr. Robertson seemed disappointed at her refusal, but Millicent was quite firm, and the arrival of the carriage called his attention away. Poor Millicent's heart beat quickly as she went into the drawing-room to bid good bye to Mrs. Robertson and Clara, who parted

from her with the greatest coldness; as she crossed the hall, Fanny darted out of the library and throwing her arms round her neck began to cry, and declared she would never like her next governess, and begged Miss Thornville to write to her; and while Fanny was pouring forth her expressions of affection, Tom suddenly appeared, and taking Millicent's hand in both of his, said—"Miss Thornville, I am afraid it is all my fault you are going; I know I am a stupid fellow, but that does not make me like you any the less; I will be down at Heatherton before long, and explain it all to you, and I hope I shall be able to win over the old lady!" Millicent coloured painfully, but was spared a reply by Mr. Robertson who had been speaking to the coachman, coming back into the hall. "I am sorry to hurry you, Miss Thornville," he said, "but if we lose the half-past twelve o'clock train, there is not another till three."

"Are you going too, Sir?" asked Tom.

"Oh yes," replied his father, "I shall see

Miss Thornville safe to Stocklee," and handing her into the carriage, they drove off through the park, looking still beautiful in it's autumnal garb, past the quiet, peaceful Rectory, and then turning towards Church-lane, they drove into the high road. Millicent leant forward in the carriage to look out; every step recalled some fresh remembrance, and though the Horton and Westworth road lay to their left, and they were going in another direction still Millicent hoped that at some point, she should catch a glimpse of the old turrets of the Chase. As they turned round to cross Seaton Downs, for one moment the whole range of the Westworth hills stood before her bathed in sunshine, and below, buried in its noble woods, she saw a faint outline of the Chase, but as she looked out and thought of her happy visit there, after the fire, it disappeared from her view, and the dull road across the Downs was all her eye rested on. Kind-hearted Mr. Robertson tried to amuse and cheer her; he was one of those simple-minded people who

would not do one unkind action or say an angry word to any one, and he was always annoyed at his wife's injustice to her governess, which now called forth a double expression of kindness on his part; it was evident to Millicent, from his conversation, that he had not heard anything about Lord Fortescue, and she was very glad of it, as she began to hope Mrs. Robertson would not make it public. "It will all be right by and by, Miss Thornville," he said, cheerfully, "and perhaps we shall see you again at Staplehurst before long; when Katie comes home, she will arrange it all; everything goes wrong when she is away; if you have letters to send to her, forward them to us, and I will see that they are enclosed safely to her. Have you any messages to leave for any one in Staplehurst?"

"I should like the Seymours to know why I left," replied Millicent, colouring. "They have always been such kind friends to me, that it would grieve me if they thought I was neglecting them, by not saying good-bye. I shall write

to Mrs. Seymour when I arrive at Heatherton. But if you would be so kind as to explain a little for me, I should feel extremely obliged."

"To be sure I will," said Mr. Robertson. "They shall know it was only a little whim of my wife's—a ladies' quarrel."

Millicent made an effort to be cheerful in return for Mr. Robertson's endeavours to amuse her, and thus the drive passed quickly; and they rattled over the pavement along the little town of Stocklee as the clock struck twelve.

"We are half-an-hour too soon," said Millicent. But Mr. Robertson had arranged it so on purpose, that they might have time for luncheon at the Swan Inn, where the coachman put up; and Mr. Robertson sent to the station for a new Bradshaw, that there might not be any mistake about the train. No one could have taken greater pains to make Millicent forget her troubles. To the very last moment he seemed to be thinking what he could do for her. He paid for her ticket, insisted on purchasing sundry volumes of the railway library

to beguile the time during her journey, and, finding a carriage containing few people, he put her in, handing her shawls and parcels, and stood talking by the door till the bell rang, when he begged her to write to Fanny, and say how she reached Heatherton; and, watching the train till it disappeared, he said to himself, "Poor girl! it is a hard thing to have no parents or home to receive you!"

And Millicent, how did she feel as she parted from kind Mr. Robertson? She could scarcely realise her position—scarcely believe that she was returning to Heatherton: it had come upon her so suddenly, that she hardly understood why she was leaving Staplehurst. She had risen that morning apparently as settled there as usual; and now, at mid-day, she was journeying far away; and not having heard from Lord Fortescue, she knew not what to do or expect. If he had only written to her, she thought she could have borne all patiently.

It was a long journey of several hours before they arrived at Red Cross, the station

where the coaches left which passed through Heatherton; and when there, to Millicent's great annoyance, the last coach was gone, and she had no alternative but to remain at Red Cross. She spent a dreary, sleepless night, with thoughts of home and all its past happiness,—of Staplehurst, and her eventful life there; but principally, her mind dwelt on the painful suspense occasioned by Lord Fortescue's silence. How did the lonely, unprotected girl endeavour to raise her mind to where alone she could find strength to bear her present trials!—how earnestly did she ask to be directed aright in all that might concern her future happiness, and that she might be kept from hard thoughts towards those who were the cause of her present sorrow; and she was heard and answered, for bright, ministering ones were near to treasure up each whispered prayer, and in the time appointed, they would bring the balm to soothe the orphan's sorrow.

Millicent left Red Cross very early in the

morning, and passed again over the road she had so often travelled with her parents, in their own comfortable carriage—and now she was journeying a friendless orphan, and the solitary occupant of a stage-coach! The road was everywhere familiar to her, here, she recognised a farm-house, there, a way-side inn, and then—the 'Firs,' where Tom Robertson had joined them on her sad journey to Staplehurst; and as she drew nearer to Heatherton, the surrounding country increased in intense interest, and brought to her mind a thousand home recollections; and when she caught sight of the sea, and heard its waves splashing and murmuring against the beach with a dull, hollow, sound, all her childhood's happiness and joyous sports rushed to her mind, and she wept aloud.

As they approached the village, Millicent let down the window and looked out through her tears; at the toll-gate, she recognised the same old man who had stood there for years; each cottage and little shop she could name;

and as they passed the church, with its rough stone tower, grown green with the salt spray that was blown upon it, she felt a peculiar thrill in her heart, which increased, when she beheld the lodges and shrubberies of her late home; but by them rolled the coach, till it stopped before a pretty cottage, covered with American creepers, standing in a pleasant little garden. Here Millicent alighted, and, as she waited to pay her fare and see her luggage taken down, the door was opened by Mrs. Lucas's little maid, who called to her mistress, "Oh, Ma'am, here is Miss Thornville!" and Millicent, leaving her things in her care, ran up the garden-walk, and was received in the arms of her faithful old nurse. It was some time before she could compose herself sufficiently to explain to Mrs. Lucas the reason of her abrupt return, and satisfy her anxiety respecting her pale and altered appearance. She told her that Mrs. Robertson had been extremely displeased with her the day before, and had dismissed her in anger,

without any just cause, and that Mrs. Robertson had never liked her.

"And, dear nurse," said Millicent, "I know you will let me remain with you; I do not think I can again take a situation;" and she coloured, as she thought how soon Lord Fortescue might come and claim her as his bride.

"Let you remain!—dear Miss Thornville, of course I will; I told you from the first you were not fit for that sort of employment, and, after losing your nice friend, the Miss Kate you told me so much about, it could not be pleasant to stay; I will make my cottage as comfortable for you as I possibly can, and who should be more welcome than the daughter of the dear good master and mistress through whose bounty I obtained it? But, dear Miss, you must be wanting some dinner?" and Mrs. Lucas bustled away to prepare something nice for her young lady.

Millicent went to the back window, and looked on the sea, with its waves rolling over

the sands; and she thought of the lines Lord Fortescue had made on that pleasant walk from church before Kate's visit to Torquay.

CHAPTER II.

'Surely 'tis all a dream—a fever dream!
The desolation and the agony.'

MRS. HEMANS.

THE business that had called Lord Fortescue so suddenly away, was the arranging some of his uncle's property; it lasted longer than he expected, to his great annoyance, as he naturally wished to go back to Horton without delay. For a week he deferred sending Millicent a second letter, hoping each day to be able to return; but when he found that probably he might be obliged to remain another week, he wrote and expressed his regrets. Unfortunately, however, for Millicent, his let-

ter never reached Staplehurst, and Lord Fortescue felt surprised at receiving no reply. During his stay in London he met one of his mother's old friends, who, accidentally hearing his name, immediately introduced herself to him. Mrs. Meredith was the widow of a barrister who had formerly lived at Westworth, and a very kind, agreeable person. She had known and valued Mrs. Heyward, and was extremely pleased to become acquainted with her son, and immediately invited him to a party at her house, which was some miles out of town, on the following Tuesday—an invitation which Lord Fortescue did not refuse.—He was quite glad to be released for a few hours from the tiresome law business that detained him in London, and entered Mrs. Meredith's drawing-rooms, happy to have found one who had been his mother's intimate friend, and whom he recollected when a child, as one of the few visitors at the Chase. He conversed cheerfully with her about Horton and the neighbourhood for some time, till she was

obliged to leave him to speak to some of her guests.

"He appears a very superior young man," said Mrs. Meredith to her sister, who was standing near her; "I have not seen him since he was a child, till I accidentally met him in town last Wednesday; he reminds me strongly of his mother; you know she was my great friend."

"Young Heyward, is he not?" replied the lady.

"No; Lord Fortescue; he came into the title at his uncle's death."

"Is he a son of Frank Heyward?" asked a tall gentleman near her.

"Yes, he is; did you know Mr. Heyward?"

"To my cost, dear Madam; I can never forget the consequences of my acquaintance with him," he said, bitterly. "It is to be hoped the son is an improvement upon the father."

"The sins of the father should not be visited upon the children; and you forget he is my guest, Colonel Mason."

"Pardon me, Madam," he replied, "but I have reason to feel warmly on the subject;" and he moved to another part of the room.

"Emily," said Mrs. Meredith, calling towards her a lively looking girl; "I want to introduce you to Lord Fortescue," and taking her across the room, she left her daughter to amuse her young guest. Miss Meredith was not pretty, but her expression was intelligent and pleasing, and she was generally spoken of as nice looking; she was just seventeen, and the youngest of a large family, all of whom were married. She talked to Arthur for some time about Westworth, where she was born, and which since her father's death, she had visited several times. When the music commenced, he asked her for the first quadrille, but she was already engaged for several dances; she however, offered to introduce him to a partner, but telling her he did not care to dance, he walked through the adjoining rooms, in one of which he found a table covered with beautiful engravings, with which he amused himself for

some time; but his thoughts would wander to Millicent, he feared that increased annoyance from Mrs. Robertson, had in some way prevented her answering his letter, and he longed to go back to Horton, and release her as soon as possible from her present painful position. While occupied with these reflections, he recollected he might be expected to join the dancing, and he returned to the ball-room to see if Miss Meredith were disengaged; but, she was just being led out to a polka, and after watching the dancing, and conversing with those near him, he went back to the comparatively quiet room, where he had been looking at the prints, but they had attracted a group of admirers, so he passed on to the library, where card tables were laid out, but which was then empty. Lord Fortescue had a great dislike to card-playing, as he always associated it with gambling, which had been one of Mr. Heyward's prominent vices; the recollection of his unfortunate father, had made him thoughtful, and he

stood leaning against a pedestal which was nearly hidden by a curtain; when two gentlemen entered the room; they evidently did not see him, for one of them walked up to the table, and turning over the cards, said, as if in answer:

"Yes, it is odd enough your meeting this young Heyward, here, he looks a melancholy fellow; I should think from what a brother officer of mine, Sherwell, tells me, he is strongly tinctured with methodism, but very good-tempered."

"That is more than his father was," said the elder of the two, who was Colonel Mason.

"I thought Mr. Heyward was mad—was he not, Colonel?"

"Aye—mad as a March hare!—it is a heritage of the family, and I pity any girl that marries Fortescue. I will venture to say, from the expression of his countenance, that, before many years, he will be under *surveillance*."

"But was not his father always at large?"

"A little too long—if he had been looked after, he might have been alive now."

"Is it true that he committed suicide?" asked Colonel Mason's companion.

"I never heard all the particulars of that affair, as I was in India at the time; but this I do know, that he was the death of his wife, and, I believe, that preyed upon his mind at last; she was a beautiful creature, that Millicent Heyward."

"What made her husband treat her so barbarously?"

"Family madness, my dear fellow, was at the bottom of it all—though, without that, there never lived a worse man than Heyward. He was a gambler—and, in short, a perfect *mauvais sujet.* He challenged me when I was a mere boy, and the result was, a severe wound, the effects of which I feel to this day—added to which, he was the ruin of my brother James, who lost every farthing he possessed at the gaming-table through him. I never forgave him, and never can—though

madness, the bane of the Heyward family, might have been the cause of all his bad propensities."

Part of this conversation was carried on at the door, where they remained talking, with their backs towards Lord Fortescue.

There are some moments in many persons' lives, so bitter and intensely overwhelming, that, in after life, when the mind reverts to them, the wonder is, how they could survive under a blow so crushing; but the arm of mercy that gives strength in the hour of need, is not seen—for few can look through the heavy clouds that hang over them in such a season. Terrible truths, hitherto unknown to Lord Fortescue, were revealed to him; he had not intended to listen, but, imperceptibly, the conversation had stolen upon him; and, after the first few sentences, he could not move from that spell-bound spot.—His father had committed suicide, and madness was inherent in the family!

Fortunately for Lord Fortescue he was alone

in his agony at that moment, the two gentlemen having left the room. "My father was mad!" he kept repeating to himself with painful earnestness; "and I, too, must become another prey to that fearful malady!" A still, small voice seemed to whisper in his ear—"Trust, trust!" but he heeded it not: he thought of Millicent, and his agony increased; he clasped his hands together, and leant his head upon them, and large drops stood on his forehead. Oh, who amongst that gay throng, moving so merrily to the music and the dance, could have thought, that within sound of their light steps, one of their youthful party was suffering such intense sorrow!

Mrs. Meredith had looked occasionally for Lord Fortescue, but as the ball-room was very crowded, thought he might be dancing where she could not see him; but as the evening advanced, she wished to have some more conversation with him; and with that intention was seeking him, when he came up to her. His countenance expressed so much pain and

distress, while a tremulous motion played round his mouth, that Mrs. Meredith felt alarmed, and said—"You are ill, Lord Fortescue?" "I am," he replied, hurriedly, with a strong effort at composure, "and, with your permission, I will return home at once." Mrs. Meredith endeavoured to persuade the young lord to remain at her house till the morning, promising to take every care of him; but he told her it was impossible for him to stay, as his law business was not finished, and that he had an engagement to meet his counsel very early the next day. Mrs. Meredith felt, that there was a determination in his voice and manner that prevented her from persisting in her request; and after many expressions of friendly interest on her part, and excuses on his, for leaving so abruptly, he hurried out of the room. Lord Fortescue had ordered his carriage much later, but he refused the many offers of the servants to fetch it, and went himself to the inn to find the coachman. The man was surprised at his master's appear-

ance, and request for his carriage immediately. Arthur begged to have a private room while the horses were being put-to, and the landlady curtsied him into her best parlour, looking with much sympathy on his distressed countenance. After she closed the door, he turned the lock, and, throwing himself on his knees, exclaimed, in a voice of intense bitterness: — "Oh, God of mercy, visit not my parent's sins on me!" the still, small voice seemed again to say: — "Ask, and ye shall receive;" and he did ask—for, from that room, whose walls had often resounded with the song of the drunkard and profane, a prayer arose, earnest in its depth and fervour, and beautiful in its child-like simplicity: he prayed for faith and patience—faith to carry him through his trials, and patience to bear them.—"They will end in Heaven!" he murmured, as he rose from his knees; his cheek was wet with tears, but his countenance calmer, and his manner perfectly composed when he entered his carriage. As he looked out at the star-

lit heavens, how he longed to mount upwards and join his mother in the land where 'the weary are at rest!' Then, thoughts of Millicent haunted him,—oh, should he entail misery on her, or must he relinquish his dearest earthly treasure?—Such reflections would come, and bring pangs of bitterness to his heart; and thus was he occupied till he arrived at his London residence.

"My lord," said John Adams, as he met Lord Fortescue in the hall, "you have returned early." And then, as his master passed beneath the lamp, and its light fell on his sad, pale countenance, he exclaimed anxiously, "pardon me, my lord, is anything the matter —are you ill?"

"I do feel ill, John," replied Lord Fortescue, as he went into the library; "but this law business will be over soon, and then I shall go back to Horton."

"You have been working too hard, my lord," said John; "but would not your lordship wish for medical advice?"

"Oh, no, John—I am not ill to that extent;" and Lord Fortescue closed his eyes as if to shut out some distressing thought. Presently he looked up. "John," he said, "do not perplex yourself about me—I will retire to rest immediately. I feel harassed and bewildered."

When Arthur had dismissed his faithful servant, he threw himself in his arm-chair and wept sad, bitter tears; and mingled with them rose prayers—earnest supplications. "My happy summer has passed away, and ended in sorrow," he thought. "Perhaps it is well; I was becoming too much occupied in self, and forgetting my entire dependence on my Maker. The cup is bitter, but help me to drink it without one word of repining. Oh, do not let me be like the seed sown on the rock, which, in time of temptation, falls away. My sweet mother had trials—terrible ones—and she bore them like an angel. Oh, Heavenly Father, let the light that illumined her soul shine into mine! Oh, save me, for I have kept thy precepts!"

He continued for some time with his eyes uplifted to heaven; and, as he prayed, his earthly troubles, though they were there still in all their weight, seemed less hard to bear; and when in the agony of his sorrow he exclaimed, "'I will not go except Thou bless me,'" a ray of peace seemed to descend upon him; and as he laid his head throbbing and heavy on his pillow—though sorrow and fear of madness hung over him—yet he could fix his eyes on the Father of all, and knew that He who heard the young ravens' cry could hear his; and when at last he slept, it was peacefully. But that sweet sleep lasted but a short time, and then he awoke with a sense of something strange on his mind, which he could not realise at first. He tried to shake it off, but there it was. Oh, would he had never gone to Mrs. Meredith's party, and heard that dreadful news! It was quite light, and, reaching his Bible, he tried to read; but his head ached—he could scarcely see the pages. But though he could not distinguish the words, he

knew that they were there, and that they were 'written for his comfort, that he, through patience, might have hope."

It was with a heavy heart that Lord Fortescue descended to breakfast that morning, with the intention of enquiring from Eager all that he knew about his father; he found the old attorney reading the *Times*, through his great silver-rimmed spectacles. "Good morning, my lord," he said, "you look all the worse for your party last night, and more fit to be in bed than going to Chancery Lane."

"I should not be any better in bed, Eager," said Lord Fortescue, looking musingly at the fire, and his former expression of melancholy, which had worn off so much lately, under the influence of pleasant society, once more overshadowed his young countenance. Eager stood with his eyes fixed enquiringly on him, evidently aware something was the matter, but, neither of them spoke till the servant had brought in the breakfast, and then, as he closed the door after him, Arthur

turned to Eager, and said in a tone of sadness, "I heard some dreadful news last night, that has quite overpowered me."

"What is that, my Lord, nothing has happened wrong at home, I hope?"

"It is nothing of that kind, but something terrible from the past, which I never heard before; Eager, did you ever learn the particulars of my father's death?"

The old man looked quite startled by this earnest question, and by Lord Fortescue's sudden manner. "My Lord," he replied, evasively, "Mr. Heyward died in Paris, and we were none of us there."

"Yes, Eager, I know that, but what was the nature of his illness?"

"Well, my Lord, no one seemed to know much about it, but I suppose it must have been a fit, or something of the kind," he replied, looking away.

"Was it nothing worse?" asked Lord Fortescue, in a low tone; "did you never hear any rumour of madness being in our family?"

"There," exclaimed the old man angrily, "That is Mrs. Meredith's doing, she might have let it alone. I think ladies will always tattle about things they know nothing of! My lord, if Mrs. Meredith has been raking up old stories, the best thing you can do is to forget them."

Mrs. Meredith told me nothing, Eager—it was from strangers the dreadful intelligence came"—and Lord Fortescue narrated, in a few words, the conversation he had overheard in the library, and then looked up at Eager with an expression of intense sorrow.

"I had rather have died in that fire," exclaimed Eager, "than that you should have heard all this!—the very thing we kept from you so carefully—but, my lord, you must not take it to heart so; it is certainly true, Mr. Heyward did die mad; but, as to the rest of the family, there were not finer or more sensible people in the county—and so looked-up to; just mention the Heywards, and see, my lord, the deference paid to their name."

"There was not much deference paid to it by those two gentlemen last night; but, Eager, are you certain my father was the only member of our family, the manner of whose death was concealed from me?"

"I could swear to it, my lord; why, there is many a family, where one goes out of their mind."

"But, Eager, when my unfortunate father died, was every particular inquired into?"

"Yes, my lord, every thing that could be learnt; but the physician, who was with him, left Paris, the very day of his death, for foreign parts, and nothing very positive could be ascertained; there always appeared a mystery hanging over it; but, my lord, it is no use vexing yourself about a circumstance that happened so many years ago—it is gone by, and ought to be forgotten."

"I cannot forget it, Eager—it is new and terrible to me," said Lord Fortescue, earnestly —"did you never think my uncle strange and unaccountable sometimes?"

"Yes, my lord—but you may depend, it was only eccentricity."

"But why should my uncle be eccentric more than others—do you not think that might have been a part of the same thing?"

"No, my lord—there is no reason for supposing anything of the kind; the late lord was as sharp and quick, in managing his affairs, as any lawyer; and, as to keeping away from society, he never cared for it from a child, and probably that caused his peculiar habits."

"I used to imagine I inherited it a great deal," said Lord Fortescue.

"Well my Lord, I am sure you cannot complain now, about not caring for society. You appeared lively and happy enough with your friends at Staplehurst, and when I have met you with them, you seemed to talk and be as agreeable as any of the young people; my lord, it will not do for you to be getting fancies into your head, I know what it is, you overworked yourself on the night of the fire, and

you are feeling the effects of your noble conduct, now, it is all my fault."

"No, Eager, what I feel now, has nothing to do with the fire; you can imagine this sudden intelligence, is a great shock to me — and so my father terminated his own unhappy existence, it is well my mother did not live to know it!"

"I think it was her loss that preyed upon his mind," said Eager.

"So they said last night, but, Eager, though the manner of my father's death is very dreadful to hear, I think I could have borne that, but the idea that I may lose my reason, and the life I wished and thought to spend so happily and usefully, may be passed in mental darkness, this is terrible, indeed!"

"My lord, it is wrong to give way like this," said the old man very much distressed.

"Eager," exclaimed Lord Fortescue, suddenly; "have you ever thought me strange and different from other young men of my own rank?"

"Yes, my lord, quite different," said Eager, rising; "there is no one who would have acted so nobly as you did on the night of the fire; no one who would have risked his life, not alone to save the old steward, but even to rescue a few relics he valued!—what landowner devotes his time, his money, in short his whole life for the good of his tenantry? and what nobleman is beloved by them, like you? —and, my lord, who is so good and forgiving as you?—never bearing any one malice, but overlooking every bad act—did not poor Turton, whom everyone else would have sent to prison, tell me with his own lips, that he would bless you to his dying day, for saving him from ruin, and his aged parents wept when they mentioned your name, and prayed God to bless you, and preserve you long to your tenantry—oh, my lord, there is no madness in this!"—

Lord Fortescue could not reply, and Eager went on trying to cheer and rouse his young lord, till the carriage was announced, and

Lord Fortescue, was obliged to forget for a time the weight of care that oppressed him, and devote his whole attention to the winding up of the business that had detained him so unwillingly from the Chase.

CHAPTER III.

'————Farewell, glad life!
Bright opening path to love and home, farewell!'
MRS. HEMANS.

"WELL, Mamma," said Clara Robertson, on the evening of Millicent's departure, "does it not feel very comfortable without Miss Thornville; the house seems quite different, now she has gone; but you have never told me what excuses she made for herself?"

"We have had so many interruptions to-day, that there has not been any time to talk about it; but you never heard anything like the contradictions and odd story she made up; first, she confessed to having encouraged

Tom, and, it appeared to me, expected he would marry her, before he had even proposed to her; then suddenly she changed, and maintained a piece of effrontery, I should scarcely have thought her capable of."

"What was that, Mamma?" asked Clara, all attention.

"I cannot believe a word of it," continued Mrs. Robertson, "and I said so to her; but recollect, Clara, I do not wish what I now tell you to be repeated, because it will reflect upon me, for allowing her the freedom which would admit of the possibility of such a thing occurring."

"I shall not repeat it; but what is it, Mamma?" asked Clara, impatiently.

"Well, Clara, I am going to tell you," replied Mrs. Robertson; "and, though you may have some idea of her forwardness, could you believe the girl had the audacity to declare to me that she was engaged to Lord Fortescue!"

"There, Mamma!" exclaimed Clara, exultingly—"did I not always tell you so? I

knew it was Miss Thornville from the very first, though you persisted in maintaining he admired Kate—as if I could not understand the looks of admiration and soft words he chose to bestow on our governess; I only wonder it was not disclosed long ago!"

"I cannot see what reason you have for supposing all this, Clara; for I am sure, since our return, they have scarcely seen each other."

"The mischief was done, Mamma, the very first night they met; I shall never forget how he fixed his eyes on her, as if he intended them to rest there for ever; but how long, may I ask, have the hopeful couple been engaged?"

"The day we went shopping, and took Fanny with us to Stocklee; she met him in Church-lane, and they arranged everything then, at least so she says, but I do not believe it."

"I cannot understand why you should not, Mamma," said Clara.

"We shall soon see whether it is true or false," replied her mother; "for if they are really engaged, as she affirms, they will soon marry, for it is not at all likely Lord Fortescue would allow his future lady to be a governess any longer."

"Of course not, and you may depend before long, the grand Miss Thornville will come home as Lady of Horton; Mamma, it will be singular enough, if both Lord Fortescue's estates have for their mistresses our old governesses; Mrs. Rivers is at Ashburton Hall, and I suppose we shall soon have the new Lady Fortescue to reign over the Chase! Well, I must say it is very hard that our governesses stand in the way of their superiors."

"Yes, the Colonel or Lord Fortescue would both have been such excellent connections for Kate; there is plenty of time for you, Clara, you are not nineteen; but it certainly is disappointing that Kate does not marry, so many good chances as she has had!"

"Kate is so absurdly proud," observed Clara.

"But, my dear child, surely neither his Lordship nor the Colonel are people to call forth Kate's pride—nor Sir Andrew Ellis; as to young Pearson, of course she did quite right in refusing him."

"For my part," said Clara, "I think I shall accept the first offer I have, provided always there is plenty of money."

"How different you are from Kate! I do not think she regards riches or rank, but cares only about persons suiting her in tastes and ideas. Kate is a very peculiar girl."

"Girls brought up at fashionable schools always are; but only fancy how disappointed and amazed Lord Fortescue will be to find Miss Thornville gone!"

"My opinion is, he will not care at all about it," said Mrs. Robertson.

"Oh, Mamma, I am certain he will. I should not be at all surprised if we were to have wedding cards before the month is ended

That kind of marriage is always arranged in a hurry."

"'Marry in haste and repent at leisure' Lord Fortescue appeared so amiable, he deserved some one superior to that artful girl; but I cannot allow myself to think it possible," said Mrs. Robertson.

The idea of a nobleman marrying a governess was, in her estimation, preposterous. What business a governess had to marry at all, was a question Mrs. Robertson had settled long ago in her mind.

Mrs. Robertson took an early opportunity, the next day, of visiting the Seymours, and gave them her own version of Millicent's sudden departure, omitting, however, all that referred to Lord Fortescue. Of course, Mrs. Robertson expected they would be very much astonished to hear she had left; but, to her mortification, she found her husband had anticipated her, and the correct reason why the poor governess was so unceremoniously sent away was already known to them; and,

though she tried to impress on them some of her angry feelings against Millicent, it was very clear to her—though they were too polite to say so—that they considered Miss Thornville much to be pitied. Mrs. Seymour said she intended to write to her; and Mr. Seymour observed, he feared she would find Heatherton very gloomy, now it was no longer her home.

Mrs. Robertson always disguised her feelings with the Seymours; but when she left the Rectory, on her way home, she indulged in most bitter cogitations against Millicent, and resolved never to have another governess in her house.

Mrs. Robertson considered herself thwarted and disappointed in every way—she, who knew that governesses were always kept in the background, unnoticed by any one—had been compelled by Kate to allow Millicent intercourse with her family, which she never saw given to governesses elsewhere; and this, with Kate's avowed friendship, might be the cause of some

of her friends forgetting her position under her roof. Millicent was her governess—a sort of necessary evil, where there were children to educate; and she expected from her, what was expected everywhere, that she should not only be a slave and a drudge to her pupils, but have no other companions, and be content to bear the haughtiness of her employers, and the insolence of the servants, without murmur or complaint! Her accomplishments, talents, and knowledge, were to be known only in the school-room, and for the use of the children; and, however intellectual her mind, or agreeable her powers of conversation, the governess was expected to be silent, and to learn to shrink into insignificance in the midst of those of her own age, ideas, and feelings—in short, to remain in *her station!* The children's governess was also always required to be in robust health—no headaches, no resting on the sofa, with whims and fancies—she must learn to disguise her feelings, for what business has she to be dull and low-spirited? She is

not paid to mope away her time, but to be cheerful in the midst of lessons, and cheerful in the midst of play! She is not to be considered as a lady, but mentioned as a *person!* What, then, is this *person*, who is frequently chosen for her talents, amiability, and youth? One, often, whose misfortunes—not her inclination—make her a dreary exile in the dreary precincts of a school-room! And yet, the God of love smiles down upon such, and helps them in their path of usefulness; and, though the road may be dreary, yet, if it leads to Heaven, who would not envy the 'new white robe' prepared by angels, which, at the close of life, awaits the governess!

On the evening of the day that Millicent left, Lord Fortescue returned to the Chase; his law business was settled most satisfactorily, and himself in possession of an increase of income he had not expected; but what charms had riches for him, indeed, what charm had any possession now? for in spite of all Eager's assurances to the contrary, and his reasonings

with himself, the belief in the family madness had taken such hold of him, that everything else was forgotten in that knowledge, and the dreadful alternative of bringing Millicent into such a connection, or else giving her up for ever. How different he thought his home now, when he left all seemed joyful in the prospect of soon bringing Millicent to be its mistress, and gladden his solitude; now all was gloom, for how could he allow her to unite herself with one, over whom such a dreadful malady hung, and who, perhaps, in a short time might be taken from her? for the words he had heard at Mrs. Meredith's party still rang in his ears: "In a few years he will be under close *surveillance.*" He shuddered: what then would become of Millicent? No, he felt she could no longer be his, he must tell her all conscientiously, and then absolve her from her engagement, and thus seal his own fate, and she might learn to forget him, and become happy again, though he must live a life of misery. But suddenly he asked himself, why did he

repine? for though his days could be gladdened by no earthly joy, yet could he not spend them in usefulness, in double exertion to benefit those around? But then came the thought of the dreadful ordeal he must undergo in explaining all to Millicent, and how was he to obtain an interview with her without exciting remark, for he had resolved to tell no one, not even Mr. Seymour, of their engagement, lest it should interfere with Millicent's future prospects. About mid-day he set out towards the Rectory, thinking, perhaps, he might meet her, and yet dreading the result, but instead of Millicent, he saw Fanny Robertson, walking out with her nurse. He thought immediately that Millicent must be ill, and that was the reason she had not answered the letter he had written in town; but Fanny soon undeceived him, for child-like, she almost instantly began to tell him her troubles, and how grieved she had been to part with 'dear Miss Thornville.' It required Lord Fortescue's utmost command over himself, to hear without

remark, that Millicent had left the Park, that 'mamma sent her away in a hurry, on the preceding day,' and that 'poor Miss Thornville had looked so very miserable for the last fortnight.'

Arthur parted in a hurry from Fanny, as he felt unable to control his feelings any longer. Of course, Fanny did not know, so could not mention the cause of Millicent's sudden dismissal; but Lord Fortescue, who had always noticed Mrs. Robertson's dislike to her, imagined it must have been under some sudden feeling of anger; and he resolved, after he had visited the Rectory, to call at the Park, for there he would probably learn the reason of her abrupt departure. He walked along perplexed and thoughtful towards the Rectory. The leaves were becoming variegated with their autumnal shades of brown and gold; the sun shone in and out of the rich woods, shedding a bright hue over the whole; and though the air was cool, yet all around was lovely, and the scene such as to attract the attention and admiration

of one less absorbed in sorrowful reflections than Lord Fortescue. At the Rectory he did not learn any news: Mr. Seymour was out, and his aunt talked only of Arthur's altered looks, which she instantly attributed to his short stay in London. When he left her, he went directly to the Park, where he found Mrs. Robertson, who, under the influence of her excited feelings, commenced abusing governesses in general, and said she was obliged to dismiss Millicent in consequence of something disagreeable she had discovered. The observant Clara watched Lord Fortescue attentively during the conversation, and the anxious expression of his countenance, and occasional compression of his lips, confirmed her in the persuasion that he was deeply interested in Millicent. Poor Lord Fortescue learnt nothing satisfactory from Mrs. Robertson, but that Miss Thornville had gone back to Heatherton, to her old nurse, Mrs. Lucas; and he thought, from Mrs. Robertson's severe remarks, and Clara's expressions of contempt, that they must be ignorant

of the engagement between Millicent and himself.

Lord Fortescue, returned home quite as depressed as when he went out, though he felt it would be far less difficult to write to Millicent, than to tell her, the fearful reasons which obliged him to break off their engagement; how could he have endured to meet her, had she remained at the Park, with common politeness, as if he had never loved her?—yes, though his heart was full of tenderness to Millicent, and he even shed tears of bitter sorrow at exchanging no parting words of sympathy, still he felt he ought not to visit Heatherton, and that his determination was right and honourable—and locking himself into his library, he sat down to write the letter that was to seal his doom. He was much distressed when he thought of her sorrow, on receiving it, and yet it must be sent—sheet after sheet did he commence, and tear up in despair—till he laid down his pen, and his lips moved in supplication that he might have

strength to overcome a weakness that might prevent him performing what he felt to be his duty—and after many efforts, many painful pauses, he succeeded in composing a letter which was, manly, honourable, and affectionate, and in sympathising with her sorrow, his own appeared forgotten.—He commenced by expressing his regrets at her sudden departure, and fears that she had not received his letter —and then came the dreadful news! he told it in a truthful and decided manner, so as to preclude all possibility of her having the least hope of his changing his present determination, though at the same time he showed the greatest regard to her feelings, and forgetfulness of his own dreary lot; and while declaring his affectionate interest in all that concerned her, he hoped she would endeavour to forget him and seek her happiness elsewhere.

Oh, how many times he read and re-read that letter! Sometimes he fancied it was too cold—sometimes, too affectionate; but it expressed what he must communicate. He pre-

pared to seal it, when a sudden impulse, to add a few words more, made him open it, and he wrote, hurriedly, "Millicent, pray for me!" Then he ordered his horse, that he might take the letter to the post himself, not wishing the servant to see the address; and he decided to put it in at Stocklee, thinking the ride might do him good. The sun was setting behind the hills, as he rode slowly down his beautiful park. The heavy sorrows on his mind made him long for the time when his sun should set in Heaven, and everlasting peace take the place of the thoughts that now distressed him. Death had not appeared terrible even on that night when it approached him in the fearful form of fire, for he could look calmly back to his simple childhood, and his early endeavours to please the Master whom he loved; and now, with madness hanging over him, he felt it was better to die thus, in the midst of a life of usefulness and labour, than to be overtaken with mental darkness! Such thoughts continued to distress him, and he

prayed God to avert that terrible calamity; and then the religious principle which had been his guide through life came to his aid, and he trusted that he might be spared to be useful to his tenantry. When he came out on the road, he drew up his horse by the new schools he was building. He had a kind word for all the labourers: of one he inquired after the health of his family—to another, he promised relief; and, as he passed on, they murmured 'God bless him!' which came from the depths of their heart, though they observed among themselves, with concern, how ill he looked. They did not know the sorrow that overwhelmed him, and which made him almost envy the poor labourer, who could whistle over his work; they knew not of the conflict of doubts and prayers that occupied his mind, as he rode over the dreary Downs towards the town. He went several times up and down High Street, before he could make up his mind to post the letter, but, at last, it was done. There were others,

also, putting in their letters for the general post—some full of hope, others full of business—but they heeded not him who stood for a moment by the little post-office, almost wondering at the step he had taken, thus breaking the last link in his prospect of joy.

The quiet little town, with its old-fashioned pointed houses, and narrow, ill-paved streets, was becoming obscured by the shades of evening; lights were appearing one by one in the windows, and here and there a face peeped out before the final closing for the night; cheerful fires were seen through some of the casements; thoughtful, earnest men of business hurried along; factory girls, with care and premature age marked on every feature, poured out of the paper-mills of Pearson and Co., formerly Robertson; but none knew or cared for the sorrow of him who left the town, unnoticed in the shadows that were rapidly increasing. He tried to raise his thoughts from earth and his own grief, as he rode quickly over the Downs—tried to forget Millicent—

forget everything but Heaven; and when he came into the library after his solitary journey, the expression of restless anxiety on his countenance had given place to one of settled, sorrowful endurance. His lonely dinner was soon dismissed; and then, telling his servant he did not wish to be disturbed, he drew his table to the fire, and, opening his Bible, began to read the ninety-first Psalm. He leant his head on his hand, and alternately gazed from the pages musingly at the fire, and sighed when he thought of the past. He was so intently occupied with his reflections, that he did not hear the hall bell, nor a knock at the library door; and it was not till it slowly opened that he looked up and saw Mr. Seymour. He instantly rose, and, shaking Mr. Seymour's hand warmly, exclaimed, "Oh, Everard, I am so glad you have come!"

"I feared I should be an intruder, as Hackett said, you had left orders not to be disturbed; but I was so anxious to see you, that I presumed upon our friendship to break in upon

your retirement. My mother gave me such a wretched account of you, that the first spare moment of a busy day I have hurried here to judge for myself."

"I was sorry to find you out, Everard, this morning. I only returned last night."

"Have you been overworking yourself in London?" asked Mr. Seymour, to whom the tones of Arthur's voice sounded strangely cheerless.

"Oh, no—Eager, poor fellow, had all the toil of the business; he has now gone down into Wales, on some affair of his own." Lord Fortescue paused, and looked doubtingly, as if undecided whether he should commence the subject that occupied his mind; but it was only the irresolution of a moment, and then he poured forth his sorrow into the ear of his cousin—concealing, however, all that referred to Millicent.

Mr. Seymour looked pained and grieved at this recital, but, recovering hastily his calm self-possession, he said, in a cheerful tone—

"I am glad we have you at home again; you have been harassing your mind with doubts and fears, till they are taking possession of your thoughts, and disturbing your peace: Fortescue, you must shake them off."

"But how can I, Everard, with such a prospect as I have in view?—It has been a terrible shock—it would have been better far to have known the manner of my poor father's death years ago, when it would not have made nearly so much impression on me, than to hear it in this sudden way—did you know it before?" he asked, anxiously.

"Yes—but, Fortescue, it is extremely wrong to give way to such an excess of grief and fear."

"But madness is often hereditary?" said Lord Fortescue.

"Frequently it is; but you must not think of such a thing—there is not the slightest probability of it appearing in you, my dear Fortescue; you are indulging in an unpardonable weakness, which might in time become

quite a malady; cannot you trust your life in the hands of your Maker, knowing that He who preserved you in the fire, can save you from all other calamities: if you allow your mind to anticipate evils, you will unfit yourself for your duties as a landowner, which you were carrying out so well and usefully."

"And so you think, Everard, that I am doing wrong, in allowing myself to reflect on what may be my future lot?"

"Most certainly you are, dear Fortescue; there is selfishness in it—endeavour not to think about yourself — and if you do, let it be with patience and hope; do not injure your health, and waste away your days in contemplating the probability of an evil that, as far as human judgment can decide, will never happen; you would not wish to become hypocondriac, and absorbed in yourself—God has given you the means and the inclination of being eminently useful to your fellow-creatures—improve this opportunity—'while you have time, do good unto all men,' and

look steadfastly up to Him who will make 'all things to work together for your good.' You must not think, dear Fortescue, that I do not sympathise with and feel for you; I assure you I do, most deeply; and therefore it is that I cannot allow you to indulge in anticipation of evil."

"Oh, if I thought it would only be anticipation—but, Everard, I have always imagined from a child that some misfortune was hanging over me, and now——"

"Hush, dear Fortescue!—do you call him unfortunate, whom God has blessed with His love—that great gift which only belongs to the chosen few?—call him unfortunate whom God is using as an instrument in His hands for His glory?—has He not said, 'Fear not, thou art mine,' and can you not trust Him?—if you are really His, there is nothing to fear; sickness, distress, death, nothing can hurt you—for He is by your side, and holds you up."

"I think, Everard, I could bear any other misfortune," said Arthur, sadly.

"So we all think, replied Mr. Seymour; "if we might only choose our own chastisement; but, Fortescue, this is in a great measure your own creating; you are repining, instead of praising—instead of looking at God's goodness, you have only an eye to his judgments."

As Mr. Seymour spoke, he turned to the open Bible by his side—

"Ah, Fortescue!" he said, "you cannot do better than study here—you will find comfort in every sickness, and a remedy in every sorrow—what Psalm were you reading?"

"The ninety-first," replied Arthur.

Mr. Seymour took up the Bible, and read the psalm through in his calm, sweet voice. 'He shall give His angels charge over thee.' Oh, Fortescue, you cannot indulge in fears now; you have no reason to believe God will visit with such a severe chastisement, one who has always put his trust in Him—'there shall no evil befal thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.' Think over this

psalm, Fortescue, and it will comfort you and increase your trust."

Mr. Seymour stayed long, talking encouragingly, and hopefully leading his young cousin to look up from desponding fears to Heaven, and when they parted late that night, after a prayer for the Divine blessing, Lord Fortescue was more composed and tranquil than he had been since his great sorrow.

CHAPTER IV.

'——————For awhile
Give Nature's passions way, then brightly rise
In the still courage of a woman's heart !'

MRS. HEMANS.

MRS. LUCAS'S cottage was agreeably situated on the road, at the entrance of the village, fronting some green meadows, and, at the back, commanding a delightful view of the sea, whose salt spray, in stormy weather, was often dashed against the walls. There was a pleasant parlour on one side, with windows at each end, and on the other side, a nice roomy kitchen whose wide grate, and sanded floor, looked quite inviting.

Above these were two bed-rooms, the largest of which was devoted to Millicent; and here she was occupied, about a month after her arrival, with her books and work at a table in the bow-window. It felt very strange to her to be at Heatherton again, watching the fishing-boats go out, and listening to the murmur of the waves, as she had done from a child, and stranger still, to be so near her home, and yet no longer an inmate there, but received almost on charity by an old servant. All her bright hopes of happiness were over; she had received Lord Fortescue's letter; had experienced the disappointment and sorrow that had robbed her cheek of its brightess, and her lip of its smile, and she had answered that letter, nearly blinded by the tears that fell on the paper; expressed her sympathy—her grief, and though she longed still to unite her fate with his, even should it be a sad one; yet, this must be untold, and from henceforward she must be content to sit down quietly and learn patience and resignation.

Another great trouble to her was never hearing from Katie; for Millicent felt sure her silence could only be caused by Mrs. Robertson's misrepresentations; she wrote frequently, addressing her letters to Staplehurst, little guessing that Clara, knowing her handwriting, burnt them with those notes which Kate had left orders were not to be forwarded.

Millicent had one pleasure, and that was occasionally hearing from Mrs. Seymour, whose kind letters, containing such Staplehurst news as she thought would interest her, were very welcome in Millicent's solitude. Solitary indeed her life was, the Manor being the only large house for many miles, but even had she been within reach of acquaintance, she did not feel disposed for society, in the position she now occupied. Mr. Mortimer, the old village clergyman, who had held the benefice for half a century, had died during her absence, and the present incumbent was a stranger to her. Mr. Mortimer's daughter, too, whose children had been Millicent's companions on that birth-

day which had terminated so mournfully, had left the neighbourhood on her father's death, so Millicent was entirely dependent on own resources, for occupation.

It was a mild November day, and Millicent, tired of sitting over her work, put on her bonnet for a stroll on the beach; Mrs. Lucas was busy in the kitchen, so Millicent set forth alone, she felt more dull and sad than usual, and scarcely caring which way she went, she took almost mechanically, the road leading to the Manor. The gates of the lodge nearest to the village were open, and she entered the grounds; it was the first time she had been there since she left her home, more than a year ago, and how altered everything seemed! The whole had a deserted appearance; the gardens were neglected, and the walks overgrown with weeds; she went along the carriage drive, and up to the house, whose closed shutters reminded her painfully of her parent's death; she rang the bell, and was answered by a servant, who had

formerly lived with them; for Sir James had retained many of the old household. She was delighted to see Millicent again, and instantly admitted her to wander over the house; in the deserted rooms and forsaken halls, she felt indeed her utter loneliness, and each step caused fresh tears of remembrance to flow; she entered the familiar drawing-room, where stood the same furniture, the same pictures; she passed over to the sunny library, where her father used frequently to spend his mornings, and then to the pleasant study, which had been her own peculiar haunt; hours that could never be recalled rose with such vividness to her mind, that she could remain there no longer, but returned to the garden; but here, the recollections were equally distressing, and she was leaving the grounds, when at the lodge, she saw an elderly lady and a young girl in conversation with the lodge-keeper, they, evidently wishing to enter, and he, denying them admittance.

When Millicent came up the lawn he bowed respectfully, and opened the gate for her to

pass through, the ladies also bowed, and the elder fixed on her a look of astonishment and almost recognition; the young lady immediately said, in a courteous pleasant voice, "We are so longing to visit the grounds, if it would not be an intrusion, may we beg your permission?"

"Phillips," said Millicent, "let those ladies walk round; I am sure Sir James would not object, or if you wish, I will go with them myself."

"Oh no, ma'am, there is no need of that—ladies, you are welcome to walk in."

"Thank you," said the younger lady, who was no other than Emily Meredith, then turning to Millicent, she expressed their obligation to her for interceding in their favour. Millicent bowed and said a few words in return, and then passed through the gates.

"Who is that young lady?" asked Mrs. Meredith.

"Miss Thornville, ma'am, the former heiress of the manor," replied the man.

"What a sweet creature," said Emily, as

they passed on; "but how you looked at her, mamma."

"I could not help it, my dear, the likeness between her and my poor friend, Mrs. Heyward, is most extraordinary, and she has so much of her expression."

"How very strange!" said Emily, "but I am sure there is some romantic history connected with Miss Thornville; I should like to know her."

Millicent went down towards the beach, thinking no more of the ladies she had met, and little imagining their acquaintance with Lord Fortescue; she sat down on a bench by the sea, and threw up her veil to let the refreshing breeze blow on her cheek; for some time she remained gazing on the sea, repeating Lord Fortescue's lines, wondering how he was, and whether he was thinking of her, and pitying his solitude far more than her own. Then, thinking she had remained out long enough, she rose to return home, when, to her great amazement, she saw Tom Robertson standing

by her side; she started back, scarcely believing it could be he, but Tom instantly shook hands warmly, expressed his delight at meeting again, and said he had been looking for her the last half hour. "I should have paid you a visit before," he continued, "but I was over in Brussels for nearly a month, and have only just returned."

Millicent inquired after his family and the Seymours, and then asked, "Has Katie returned yet?"

"No," said Tom; "have you not heard from her?"

"I have only had one letter from Katie during her absence; and that was before I left Staplehurst," replied Millicent.

"But, then, you never write to her, Miss Thornville; how is it?"

"I have written to your sister several times since I have been here," said Millicent, in surprise.

"Where did you address the letters?" asked Tom. "I heard from her only yes-

terday; and she says you must have forgotten her."

"I directed them all to Staplehurst," replied Millicent. "I would not have Miss Robertson think me neglectful on any account."

"I guess pretty well who is the cause of this," said Tom. "Miss Thornville, address your next letters, under cover, to me, and Katie will not complain of not hearing for the future. But are you not very dull, living all alone with that solemn old lady? Though she was very kind to me, and offered to send some little damsel out with me to find you; but I preferred our meeting should be alone."

"Then you found Mrs. Lucas's cottage?" said Millicent.

"Oh, yes, quite easily; and very sorry I was when the girl said you were not in. I began to fancy you had left there. The old lady, however, soon undeceived me. She told me you wanted to take another situation, but that she would not let you; and then she gave me

such a dismal account of your pining away and altering, that I could not rest in the cottage any longer, but wandered about—first on the road, then on the beach—till I found you. But, Miss Thornville, I cannot bear to think that you are wasting away your life in this wretched little village, without a single companion of your own age; I am sure Katie would be broken-hearted if she knew it."

"I do not mind the solitude," said Millicent, sadly; "though it is a great contrast to Staplehurst."

"The Park is no longer what it was, when you were there," observed Tom; "at least, I have felt the difference, and Katie's absence has made it doubly stupid. My Lord, too, does not give us half so much of his company; he works like a parson among his poor; I never saw any fellow look so altered in a short time as he has, since that visit to town. I cannot think what has come over him, nor does any one else. I asked Rowe, the other day, if he knew what was the matter with him,

and he did not appear to fancy it was any disease, but that he was getting into a low way, and he could not tell to what it might turn. I am very sorry for him, for there is not a better hearted fellow in the world; the poor cannot speak too highly of his kindness, they seem ready to fall down and worship his very name."

Millicent put down her veil, that Tom might not notice the agitation visible on her features; but her heart beat so violently, that she could not speak.

"Miss Thornville," continued Tom, "if you are not in a particular hurry to go in, we might just take another turn on the beach."

Millicent turned passively round — she scarcely knew or cared which way she went, her thoughts were entirely occupied with Lord Fortescue and the apothecary's opinion—'he did not know to what it might turn!' To madness, perhaps!—oh, no, the idea was torture—she could not bear it; and so painfully engrossed was her mind, that Tom addressed

her twice without her hearing him. "Miss Thornville," he said the third time, "your leaving in such a hurry was very unfortunate, but you have no successor, for poor Fan was sent off to school at Cheltenham."

"Poor child!" said Millicent, "I hope she is happy?"

"Not half so happy as she was with you; Miss Thornville," he continued, after a pause. "I am sorry my mother was so wrath the evening I disclosed my wishes; but, whether she likes it or no, I am still unchanged in what I then told her. Yes, Miss Thornville, after having once seen and known you, it would be impossible to care for any one else; so, as the governor is not averse, you surely will not refuse my humble petition—you will not reject me, even though I am not worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with yourself?"

Millicent was completely taken by surprise, but she did not feel annoyed or embarassed, as at any other time she would have been;

her every feeling was absorbed in the sorrow of that last month, and she answered, calmly, "Oh, Mr. Robertson, I am so sorry you care for me, for I cannot return it; you should not, indeed, entertain such sentiments towards me."

"Pray do not say that, Miss Thornville!" he exclaimed; "if I did not feel every pulse of my heart beat with homage and worship for you, what should I resemble? If you will only promise to join your fate to mine, there would not be a happier fellow on the face of the earth, nor any one who would make it more the business of his life to study your wishes—everything that love or money could command should be laid at your feet."

The tears rolled down Millicent's cheek—she was almost too much overcome to speak; poor Tom! how could she bear to pain and distress him, by refusing his honest, true love! But he was waiting for a reply, and she said, with a great effort at calmness: "Mr. Robertson; I am so sorry to be obliged to say any-

thing that will grieve you, but our paths in life can never be the same."

"Oh, Miss Thornville," interrupted Tom, "if you are unwilling to act contrary to the wishes of my parents, I assure you my mother will be won over in time; and, as to the governor, he likes you better than any other young lady—and I can promise you at least a kind father-in-law, and a queen of sisters: why, Katie will not be able to make enough of you."

"Pray do not talk so, Mr. Robertson; I implore you not to fix your hopes on me, for I cannot bear to injure any one's happiness—and yet I must tell you truthfully it cannot be—you must not think of me any more."

"But I cannot help it!" he exclaimed; "I would do any thing, put up with any thing, only to win you; you may find many people handsomer and cleverer, but you never will meet with any one who loves you more truly than I."

Millicent could not answer — and, sitting

down on a bench on the sands, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears. Poor Tom looked alarmed—and, standing by her side, endeavoured to rouse and cheer her; but, for some time, she sobbed bitterly—at last, however, she recovered herself, and rising, begged Tom to excuse her burst of sorrow.

"Excuse you, Miss Thornville! I ought rather to beg your forgiveness for persisting in what is disagreeable to you; but may I ask just one question more—and then, if you wish it, not another word will I breathe on the subject;—is there no hope for me, that at some future day you may grant me the favour you now deny?"

"There is none," replied Millicent, falteringly; "you must centre your hopes, Mr. Robertson, on one who can reward your warm and generous feelings as they deserve; but, though I cannot give you the regard you wish, I shall not cease to value and respect your friendship."

"Miss Thornville," exclaimed Tom, while a

shade of intense disappointment clouded for a moment his good-humoured countenance, "I shall always be one of the warmest friends you have, and as such, it grieves me to see you unhappy—anything I can do for you, only mention, and it shall be done."

Unselfish Tom, how soon he forgot himself and this—the keenest disappointment he had ever known—and for the rest of the walk his sole object seemed to be to amuse and enliven Millicent, whose melancholy he soon saw arose from something more that the solitude of her position, though what it was he could not discover.—He accompanied her to the cottage, and dined there, and remained conversing with Mrs. Lucas till Millicent had written a letter to Kate, which he promised to enclose; and then Tom took the evening coach for Red Cross, where he purposed staying the night. When he was gone, Mrs. Lucas, who always fancied Millicent's sad looks were caused by not hearing from some one to whom she was attached, congratulated her on his visit, and

the attention of such a 'kind, nice-spoken gentleman.' But Millicent was obliged to undeceive her, and destroy the fond old woman's hopes, and assure her how far she was from making any new connection.

After Tom's visit, though Millicent had more to make her unhappy in thinking of Lord Fortescue's sad alteration, and also in having been compelled to distress poor Tom; yet, she began to reflect how very much absorbed she had been in her own selfish feelings since her return to Heatherton. Lord Fortescue was exerting himself among his tenantry, and Tom had forgotten his regrets in endeavouring to please her; and she, what was she doing?—only sitting down and indulging in melancholy;—and Millicent determined that for the future her life of restlessness should cease.—On the following day she rose early, and, after a fervent prayer for help, descended, and before Mrs. Lucas was down, arranged the little parlour with its ornaments of shells and sea-weeds. She thought it right,

as Mrs. Lucas was so good as to allow her to remain, that she should endeavour to help her, and not sit down in the way, to be petted and waited upon, and cause trouble.

Of course the old nurse was very much distressed when she made her appearance down stairs, to find Millicent kneeling before the kitchen fire, shading her face with her handkerchief, and making toast; and still more so, to see the breakfast spread there, instead of in the parlour—but Millicent said she liked it, that it was warmer there, and it was not worth while lighting two fires early in the morning—and during breakfast, Millicent tried to be cheerful, tried to enjoy her simple fare, in fact, to be purely unselfish—and well did she succeed. After she had assisted a little in the household affairs, Millicent set forth, not for a solitary ramble to indulge in melancholy, but to the house of a farmer, whose wife she had heard was very anxious to have her two little girls instructed in French and music. Millicent had nearly

spent the money which she had brought back with her, and being most unwilling to be entirely dependant upon the kindness of her nurse, felt desirous of obtaining some employment. The farmer's wife thought it a very grand thing to have her little girls instructed by Miss Thornville, and made an offer of a very liberal salary; and, after a little conversation, Millicent agreed to come three times a week—and Mrs. Foster, who thought the walk lonely, promised to send some one to meet Millicent and accompany her part of the way home. She had rather a difficulty in breaking this to Mrs. Lucas, who was at first quite displeased at the idea of her young lady 'demeaning herself by teaching farmer's children!' but, by degrees, Millicent brought her to see that it would be an advantage, as she would have the pleasure of a piano, which she had much missed. The rest of that day, Millicent employed in working and reading; she found a book she thought would amuse Mrs. Lucas, and then she looked over the plan of a

course of studies she had commenced at Staplehurst, in the evening, according to Mr. Seymour's advice; and when the day was ended, she retired to rest more happy than before.

The duties of teaching were very easy; the little Fosters were well-trained, obedient children; and, though not clever, were industrious, and anxious to please her; and, after the lessons were over, Mrs. Foster was only too pleased to allow Miss Thornville to practise as long as she liked. The kind-hearted woman never let Millicent go home without some little present from the produce of her farm; and she soon learned quite to look forward to her visits to Willow Farm.

Millicent's letter to Katie soon produced an answer, warm and kind as Katie's own nature —regretting Millicent had left Staplehurst, the loss of her letters, her mother's misunderstanding, and, above all, the dreary life she must lead at Heatherton. Kate gave a slight outline of their tour through Switzerland and Italy, and

expatiated on the delights of Paris, where they were then staying, and would remain for another fortnight, when she intended returning to Staplehurst for Christmas; and, after that, Katie declared her intention of coming to Heatherton, to pay Millicent a visit.

Katie's letter, though it breathed the same elevated tone of former days, Millicent rejoiced to see, no longer expressed pride or contempt, and contained not an unkind word against any of her family.

Millicent wrote a long reply, and sent it, under cover, to Mr. Robertson, feeling sure he would kindly forward it. Itseemed to her, poor girl, that a little of past times had returned, now she could correspond with Katie. Another fresh pleasure also presented itself—Mrs. Meredith and Emily, who were staying, for the health of the former, with their friend the vicar of Heatherton, took quite a fancy to Millicent, and called on her several times, and occasionally invited her to pass an evening at the vicarage. It was impossible not to like Emily;

and though Millicent could not enter into her high spirits and love of gaiety, still she found her an agreeable companion. So, altogether, the orphan's life was becoming less irksome, and more easy to bear, now that she had faced it bravely.

It was on a stormy evening, in the middle of December, and Millicent was sitting on a low stool by the fire, with her books and candle on a chair by her side; opposite, was her nurse, comfortably ensconced in a corner, with her work; the large eight-day clock, on its black pedestal near the door, ticked loud and regularly; a grey cat on the hearth purred sleepily, and the cheerful fire shed a ruddy light over the room, which felt the more enjoyable from the roaring of the wind, and surge without. Millicent had been talking for some time about the Merediths, and their new vicar, and Mrs. Lucas had been complimenting her upon the improvement in her health and spirits; but after a time, the conversation ceased, and Millicent busied her-

self in calculating how much she must put by every week out of her little salary, before she could purchase an old piano, which was to be procured for a few pounds, at Red Cross, and she was thinking how pleasant it would be to be able to improvise and delight herself in her favorite music, and on the back of some exercises she had been correcting, she wrote the following lines:—

"'What is music?' I asked a sage one day.
'Tis joy or sadness, which I cannot say.'
I asked a child, in joyous gladness bright;
The child replied, 'Tis in the summer light;
'Tis in the carol of the gentle birds,
When thro' the woods their softest notes are heard;
'Tis in the stream whose ripples dance along;
'Tis in my mother's voice, my sister's song.'
I ask'd a dying girl, whose soft, dark eye
Was fix'd where soon she'd be—beyond the sky;
And oh! her voice was sweet as she replied,
'Her music was to hear—that Christ had died!
And when in Heav'n she could for ever sing,
'Worthy the Lamb!' and praise her God and King.'
While thus she spoke, an angel came from Heav'n
To take her where the golden harps are giv'n;
And as she lay so calm and still on earth,
Her spirit went to God, who gave it birth.

And when they wept and laid her 'neath the sod,
They thought not of her joy, nor of her God;
Knew not the music she could sing and hear,
The blissful music which now met her ear—
'Worthy the Lamb!' this was the theme of praise,
In notes harmonious, high in Heav'n they raise."

CHAPTER V.

'I marvel not, angel, that thou art gone, for heaven were better fitted for thy home than earth; but I marvel that we can live yet awhile on earth—live without thy smile.'

WHILE the Delameres and Katie were journeying from place to place, enjoying the lovely country, and the change and variety of scene; on the same route, and frequently by the same conveyance, there went two other travellers who excited the interest of all; the fair, gentle girl, whose fairy form and hectic colour, gave her the stamp of a better land, and over whom the breath of seventeen Italian summers had passed—and the tall, thoughtful man whose

every feature wore a shade of care, his whole soul, his whole thoughts appeared centred on that fragile creature, lest the cool breezes or damp zephyrs of night, should extinguish the flame which seemed but burning brighter ere it expired.—Who, that marked, would envy him that anxious eye, that look of intense, watchful interest, of almost agonized clinging to that sweet bud, the last remaining, of his garden of flowers? who would envy, that knew the bitter tears he shed in hours of solitude, when no eye was upon him, nor the bitter supplications with which he seemed endeavouring to avert the sickle of the reaper, who had marked the floweret that his lord had need of?—Was Sir James Heatherton to be envied the wealth of the orphan, driven from her home to live among strangers, was he to be envied, the Manorial estate on which he had scarce resided?—Oh, what would Millicent's broad acres be to him when he listened in solitude to the roaring blast and surging billows, and thought of his children's

graves beyond the sea, and of the orphan girl turned adrift on the wide world, perhaps heart-broken and desolate and almost longing for the home in the 'fields of light,' where his own sweet blossoms bloomed.

Grace Heatherton soon took quite a fancy to Katie, whose sympathy and pity for her were unbounded; and frequently after a day's journey, when they stopped at the same hotel, Grace begged Katie to come and sit with her, and talk about Staplehurst. It would have made a beautiful picture—the gentle, little creature lying back on her sofa pillows, with her bright lustrous eyes fixed on the handsome, intelligent countenance of Katie, as she sat on a low cushion by her side, reading to her, or trying to repeat some of her revered pastor's words, which she fancied Gracie might understand, and were suitable to her present state.

It was on a soft September evening that Katie was alone with Grace in a large room in Florence; the Heathertons had arrived at the

end of their journey, and returned to the villa, where the children had passed the greater part of their lives; and, at Gracie's earnest request, Kate had come to spend a few days there, preparatory to a separation, which both the girls felt would be lasting. Grace was better; the rest of home had revived her; and she had persuaded Sir James to pass a few hours with a friend. It was seldom he left her; the few remaining months of his beloved child's life were too precious ever to absent himself willingly from her; but to-night she had seemed so cheerful and revived, that he left her in the care of Katie with less reluctance than he was wont.

As usual, when they were together, Gracie began to talk about England. She had been so little there, that she liked to hear of the soft green fields and woody glens of Gloucestershire. Presently Katie began to talk of Horton Chase and Lord Fortescue; and then Gracie could join in the conversation, and tell how good and kind he had been to her dear

Robert, and how he never did anything wrong. From speaking of Arthur, she began to give an account of her brother and her beloved twin sister, her Marion. She told of their gentleness, their goodness, and how happy they had all been together.

"I do not think England suited us," she continued; "it was cold at Heatherton, and so dull, with nothing to look at but the sea. We were none of us quite cheerful there; and then poor Robert became ill; he never recovered; and when we arrived home again he died. It was the breaking up of our little circle; for we could not recollect poor mamma; so we never knew her loss."

The tears stood in Kate's dark eyes, and she endeavoured to turn the conversation from this sad subject, but Gracie appeared inclined to speak of it, and continued: "I am so sorry for dear papa; for, when I am gone, he will be quite alone, and I know he will be broken-hearted, for he has always loved us so much; oh, Katie, you do not know what

he is to me! Sometimes I long for a cousin, or friend, he could adopt, to be a daughter to him, and supply my place."

"Dear Gracie," said Kate, "do not talk about leaving him; you may still look forward to many happy years."

"Oh, no, Katie—I know what the doctors think, though they do not tell me; I am not afraid for myself, but for papa to lose us all so soon, is very sad; and that which makes it doubly so, is, that he imagines our delicacy was increased by taking us to England. The English doctor said Heatherton was damp, and did us harm; but our cousin Millicent lived there, and she was always well—so that cannot be."

It was the first time Gracie had ever mentioned Millicent; of course Kate had not, thinking, naturally, that it would not be a pleasant subject; but now Gracie had once commenced, Kate could not help talking of her gentle Millicent:—"Your cousin is one of my greatest friends, Gracie—and only to-day I had a letter from her."

"Do you know Millicent — how very strange!" said Grace, rising up from her couch; "and is she as good and pretty as her pictures at Heatherton represent her?"

"She is the sweetest, most lovely creature imaginable," replied Kate; "she sent a little message to you in her letter."

"Oh, did she? let me hear it, Katie, please."

Kate took out her letter, and read aloud: "I am sorry to hear that my cousin is so ill; give her my love, and tell Gracie, that though Millicent has never seen her, she prays for her."

"Did she say that?" exclaimed Gracie, her eyes kindling. "Katie, might I just read that paragraph? I should so like to see cousin Millicent's handwriting."

Katie gave it to her, and Gracie read it several times—"Thank you, dear," she said, and, leaning back on her pillow, seemed absorbed in thought. Presently, however, she roused herself, and asked, with a look of in-

terest, "Katie, have you known cousin Millicent long?"

"Since last February; she is governess to my little sister."

"Poor Millicent!" said Gracie, sighing; "does she like being a governess?—is she happy?"

"She does not like it, certainly; but, dear Gracie, she bears it beautifully, and is as happy as her own sweet nature and my poor friendship can make her."

"It is pleasant for her to have you to love," said Gracie, raising her head and resting it on Kate's shoulders. "Do tell me all you can about her. I do not know how it is, but Papa does not like cousin Millicent talked of before him. There was a misunderstanding about the Manor, I believe, and so a separation arose; but I could not comprehend it, except I pitied Millicent having to leave home."

Katie told her all about her cousin, which she thought would please her to hear—little

details of their pleasant summer rambles, their excursion to the old church, and how kind Lord Fortescue had been to her.

At the mention of this, the colour mounted to Gracie's face, and she said, smiling, "Katie, while you have been talking of Arthur, I have been planning a little romance. Would it not be happy if he and cousin Millicent learned to like each other?"

"I am not sure that they do not already," said Katie.

"I am very glad; he is so good—so very good, and she must be so sweet, that they would just suit each other. You cannot imagine what a friend Arthur was to poor Robert! We saw him first at the English church, and then Papa called on his uncle; after that, he came here frequently, and always on Sunday afternoon he used to read us beautiful parts out of the Bible, and teach us English hymns; but our Italian governess took a dislike to him, and prevented him seeing Marion and me, at last; but Robert was still much with

him, and he repeated to us, as well as he could, all the pretty things Lord Fortescue told him. Poor Robert was always very child-like, and Arthur was older than all of us; besides, we knew very little till he taught us; our nurse and governess were Catholics, and we had not been instructed out of the Bible."

Katie was always glad to hear Lord Fortescue praised, and immediately gave Grace an account of the fire and his courageous behaviour, and of the thanksgiving service.

"How I should like to have been there," said Gracie; "what a beautiful old church the one at Staplehurst must be; and I would give anything to know your good, kind clergyman, Mr. Seymour; it would be so delightful to talk to him, and get him to help me on the way to Heaven! Katie, tell me some more of the things he used to tell you."

And so in that foreign land, by the couch of that gentle, suffering girl, Mr. Seymour's words of counsel and comfort were repeated, and made of use to gladden the heart of that

young pilgrim on the heavenly road.—That evening, when Sir James came home, he was surprised to find his beloved child still resting where he had left her, encircled in Katie's arms, and laying her head on her shoulder. As he stooped down and kissed her brow, she turned her face up with a sweet smile—"Oh, Papa, Katie has been so kind; you cannot imagine what sweet things she has been telling me!"

"Miss Robertson has made you look quite blooming again, my Gracie; but are you not fatigued?"

"Oh no, Papa; though, if you think it late, perhaps I had better not remain up any longer."

Sir James always carried his darling child to her room at night: it was his pleasure, though a melancholy one, as each succeeding evening the painful thought pressed upon him how soon it would cease. As he was going to ring for her maid, and wish her good-night, she said quickly—"No, Papa, do not summon

Florette just this moment; I want to talk to you before you go."

Sir James came back, and sat down by her side.

"Papa," she continued, "I have heard something so strange this evening."

"What is it, my Gracie?" asked Sir James.

"Oh, Papa, our cousin Millicent is governess to little Miss Robertson; Katie had a letter from her only to-day, and she sent such a pretty message to me."

"Did she, Gracie?" he replied, while a shade of annoyance passed over his countenance.

"Kate says, she is such a sweet girl, but I am afraid poor Millicent cannot be happy; it must be so dull to be a governess, papa," she continued earnestly,—"why did Millicent leave the Manor?"

"My child," replied Sir James, hurriedly, "you would not understand these things were I to explain."

"If you please, dear papa," she said gently,

"I should so much like to know if you do not mind telling me."

"Millicent left it, Gracie, because it was no longer her own."

"But it belonged to her papa and mamma," said Grace, "and how was it they left it to some one else, papa; do you not think that was strange?"

Sir James scarcely knew what to answer, but Gracie, whose arm was round his neck, was looking enquiringly into his face: "Mr. Thornville did not leave it to me, dear Gracie, but Heatherton Manor became mine by an old will, which my lawyers discovered after Mr. Thornville's death."

Grace was silent for a few minutes, and then she said, "Papa, could you not have done without Heatherton?"

This was rather a startling question, but Sir James replied, calmly, "I could have done without it of course, dear, but the Manor was my property, therefore I had a right to it."

"But, papa," said Gracie, "how very odd

the lawyers did not find it out before, that you ought to have had it instead of Mr. Thornville, and then why did not cousin Millicent have some allowance, and not be obliged to become a governess: papa, could you not have spared her a little?"

"I offered her a home, still, at Heatherton, if she liked to remain," replied Sir James, not a little perplexed by Grace's questionings.

"Did you, dear papa, and what did cousin Millicent answer?"

"She preferred being independent, dear Gracie, but you must not perplex your mind any more by thinking of Millicent," and Sir James ringing the bell, Florette came in and put an end to the conversation, but not to the train of thoughts in the mind of each. Gracie lay awake long that night, puzzling over the reasons of her papa coming into possession of Heatherton Manor, and wondering why it was not his before; and then she thought of Millicent's sad fate, and how wretched it must be to give up her home, and seek a living by her

own labours. And Sir James, what made him remain up so late that night, his head resting on his hand, and every line of care more prominent on his fine countenance? was he thinking of his sweet child's words, "Could you not have done without Heatherton?" or were his thoughts occupied with those stormy mornings, when his lawyers seemed almost to plead against justice, and the counsel who was for Millicent said, "Sir James, may you never repent of this." Why had the old will ever been produced—why had he put forth his hand and grasped the orphan s portion? were questions he could not answer, but which constantly presented themselves to him, and with them came a secret misgiving—would not the judge of all the world avenge the cause of the fatherless! yes, it was even now being done, and himself becoming childless!

Sir James was grand nephew of Colonel Heatherton, of Heatherton Manor, whose only surviving child married a Mr. Thornville, grandfather to Millicent. In this way the

property had passed into the Thornville family, but the will which Sir James Heatherton's lawyers produced, was to the effect, that it should not go into the female line, and he immediately came forward as the nearest male heir. Every one declared, that this will being brought forward was a most roguish proceeding; and though Sir James was not supposed to know all that had been transacted, still, he guessed, that the business to which he had lent himself, was not altogether strictly just and honourable; but he stifled his conscience, and it was not till after the conversation with Gracie, that he gave heed to self accusations and misgivings that presented themselves to his mind; and strange to say, in proportion as his beloved Gracie's health declined, so the vision of Millicent, sad and solitary, toiling for her own livelihood, came before him.

During Kate's stay, Sir James had asked a few questions about Millicent, and Gracie had by degrees elicited the whole history of her happiness, and troubles. This history had

called forth all Gracie's sympathy, and how ardently she longed for her cousin to be restored to her home once more, no one but herself knew or imagined!—After Kate's departure she seemed to lose a little of her cheerfulness of spirit, and her chief pleasure consisted in lying on her sofa, near the window, reading the Bible, and a volume of hymns used in Staplehurst church, which Katie had given her; and from time to time her eyes would wander to her father who was always near—and thus she lingered through the winter, but when the spring came she appeared a little revived, though it was evident to all she could not last many weeks longer.

It was on a lovely evening in May, when the glow of an Italian sunset shed a golden hue over a luxurious apartment in the Villa Gloria, and illumined with its departing rays the soft, gentle countenance of Grace Heatherton; her white, thin hands moved slowiy about, among the leaves of her Bible, as though she were comparing verses; but after a time she closed it,

and lay back, looking out at the sky; her father, who was watching her attentively, saw a sweet smile play upon her lips, so lovely in its expression that he trembled lest it should be her last; he moved gently towards her sofa, and put his hands on hers.—Gracie started.

"Papa, dearest," she said, as she clasped his hands in both of hers and kissed it gently; "I was thinking so peacefully then about the days, when Arthur Heyward, used to tell us Bible stories on the terrace; papa, when you return to England, I should like you to carry him my love, and tell him how much I thank him for all he taught us."

"My precious child!" Sir James began, but could not proceed, and Gracie continued—

"Do you know, Papa dear, I have been thinking so much this afternoon about poor cousin Millicent; it would be so nice, if you could take her back again to Heatherton, and adopt her as your daughter; Katie Robertson used to tell me when she was here, that she is so kind and good, and that she never com-

plained or repined at losing her home, so she must be a very sweet girl, and Papa, you would soon learn to love her—and it would be far better than living all alone—that is what distresses me when I think of leaving you, and I am sure that I could die happier, if I thought you would have some one to care for you."

"Oh, my Gracie," said Sir James; "no one can ever be to me what you are; my angel child, you must not leave me!" and a look of intense, clinging fondness was on his face.

"But, dear Papa, you must not mourn, we shall meet again; you will be only lending me, and when we are restored to each other, it will be, never to part."

"Sweet child! can I ever hope to join you? Gracie, I am not fit to be received into Heaven!"

"Oh, yes, dear Papa, do not talk so—you must not grieve for me; and if you only would take poor Millicent in my place, it

would make us all three happy; you, dear Papa, in having a companion, another daughter—and Millicent—oh, I know from what Katie said, she is just the person to be kind to any one in sorrow—and I—oh, I must be happy if you were!"

"Dear child, it shall be as you say," replied Sir James, much moved; "I will seek out Millicent, and offer her a home."

"Oh, dear Papa, how I thank you!" exclaimed Gracie, a bright colour lighting her cheek; "and you really will learn to love Millicent, and care for her, and not allow her to work any more; think how sad it must be to have no home—and so young as poor Millicent is; Papa, do you not pity her?"

"My child," he said, in a hollow voice, "I do pity her, but I pity myself more, for sending her forth from her home; Gracie, my beloved, that home shall be restored to your cousin Millicent, it shall be hers again, and when she stands again in her childhood's halls, and looks forth on the scenes she delights in, she

shall bless my angel girl for putting it into the heart of the bereaved old man to do justice to the fatherless and oppressed;" here, Sir James covered his face with his hands and wept, and who shall say that those tears of agonised repentance were not noted down in the books of record.

"Sweet papa, you must not weep," said the gentle girl, "you ought to be happy—think how you will gladden Millicent's heart; oh, papa, and mine is lighter, freer, for I always felt as if Heatherton were not ours; we had enough, and we did not want to take away from Millicent; but now, dear papa, we will talk no more of that; kiss me, sweet papa, and let me rest in your arms, and tell you how I love you!"

In an instant Sir James subdued his feelings, and gave his every thought to his dying child.

"Dear papa," she continued, "I often think of Arthur Heyward's favourite verse, which he taught Marion and me on our birth-day,

'Their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in Heaven;' we did not then know how soon God meant to make angels of us, that we might see his face. Arthur told us, all friends and relations will know each other there, and each time the gates of Heaven open, he believed there will be joyful meetings; but first of all he said, it will be blissful enough to be where our Saviour is, and to be made happy for evermore, and we shall each have a harp of gold given us, which will never be untuned, and all the songs we sing will be in perfect harmony—papa, dear, you will like to join us all there, will you not, papa?" But before Sir James could answer, a sudden change passed over her countenance, her head rested heavily on his arm, and she said in a faint voice: "Papa, dear, would you carry me to my room, I shall be better there, Florette can undress me, I feel so sleepy."

Sir James lifted her up tenderly—she seemed almost fainting—but her arm was round his neck, and she smiled sweetly as

he laid her gently on her bed. Her maid had heard them move, and followed them in, but Gracie whispered, "Let me lie still, please, Florette. You can put a shawl over me, and then I shall sleep. Papa, stay here—where is your hand?" She held held it in her little one; and for a long time Gracie lay still, quiet, as if in sleep. Florette thought her *signorina* was dying, and saying something about "*Il medico*," hastened away; so that sad, lonely man sat in mute agony by his child's couch; and she remained calm and peaceful, like some frail flower early bent. The clock in the adjoining room ticked out the minutes as they went by, and for more than an hour the gentle little creature rested where she had been placed. But just as the sound of footsteps broke on the stillness, and Florette returned with the medical attendant, she rose up. "Papa," she called, "kiss me before I go! Marion, sister—yes—sweet Marion—I come"—and e'en while the father pressed the lips of his last earthly treasure,

the breath of Heaven fanned her cheek, and she heard the voice of the heavenly choir singing the angel's song.

CHAPTER VI.

'Where hath not woman stood,
Strong in affection's might? a reed upborne
By an o'ermastering current.'

When Kate Robertson returned once more to Staplehurst, after her continental journey, she no longer found it the cheerful place she had left. The Park looked dreary and deserted—both the children were at school—and Tom, who had pronounced Staplehurst unbearably stupid, had met Kate at Paris, and returned with the Delameres to their home in the north. The village, too, seemed duller than ordinary;

an unusually mild season had been attended with a great deal of sickness among the poor; Mr. Seymour worked doubly hard with his parishioners; and Katie fancied he looked rather more worn and fatigued than when they had last met; but she noticed with great joy that he appeared pleased to have her back. And when she begged him to allow her to undertake once more the class in the Sunday-school she had some time since given up, and promised to attend carefully to her poor, he listened to her with interest, immediately acceded to her wish, and went with her himself to the cottagers, who welcomed her gladly.

But the greatest change—and one which excited all Kate's regret and sympathetic feeling—was in Lord Fortescue. On first meeting him again, she had been quite saddened by the expression of painful anxiety, and the haggard look on his countenance. The boyish energy with which he had formerly entered into all her plans—the interest and pleasure

of their musical evenings, or any new study she had proposed—were all gone; and in their place, a quiet, settled indifference to everything except the welfare of his tenantry, among whom he toiled with unremitting zeal. Day after day might he be seen in the cottages of the sick and the aged—inquiring into their wants, and sending them immediate relief.

Katie immediately connected Lord Fortescue's change with Millicent; she felt quite certain that before her departure, he had formed an attachment to her sister's governess, but there appeared an end to it now; and the idea occurred to her, could Millicent have rejected him? though why she should do so, Kate did not understand. Tom had made his favourite sister the confidante of his proposal to Miss Thornville, and described her sorrowful looks and outburst of tears when she refused him, which Tom declared must arise from some other cause besides her lonely life; so Katie determined, on the first opportunity, to men-

tion Millicent to Lord Fortescue, and observe the effect hearing of her would have on him. It was not long before this occasion arrived. A few mornings after Kate's return, as she was sitting alone in the drawing-room writing, the servant brought her a letter, which, on opening, she found to be from Millicent. She had scarcely become acquainted with its contents when Lord Fortescue was announced. With the open letter still in her hand, she rose to meet him, and, after a little conversation about her recent journey, Katie said—"I have just heard from my friend, Miss Thornville, whose beautiful playing you used to admire so much when she was with us."

Lord Fortescue coloured as he asked—"Is Miss Thornville still at Heatherton?"

"This letter is addressed from there," replied Katie; "but Millicent tells me, almost before it reaches me, she will have crossed the Channel, and left England for an indefinite period."

The languid look on Lord Fortescue's countenance gave place to one of great interest, and he exclaimed—"Miss Thornville left England! how is that?" and then, suddenly recollecting himself, he endeavoured to put a tone of indifference into his voice as he added—"I suppose she has another situation?"

"Yes, as companion to a young lady, who is going to travel with her mother on the continent. Millicent seemed quite pleased with her new friends. It appears they took a fancy to her while on a stay at Heatherton, and engaged her quite in a hurry. Poor girl; I am very glad, for it must have been miserably dull with no companion. I heard a wretched account of her about a month ago, when she seemed quite pining away."

Katie had no doubts now of Lord Fortescue's feeling towards Millicent, by the tone of intense anxiety in which he asked—"She surely is not ill now, Miss Robertson?"

"Oh, no," said Katie, deeply regretting the

look of self-reproach and sorrow her words had called forth, "Miss Thornville appears quite well and happy again now. I am going to write to her to-day, shall I send any message from you?" Katie said this, irresistibly, on the impulse of the moment, though the next instant she thought how very strange it must sound, especially when Lord Fortescue replied, hurriedly, "Oh, no. I have not any message, thank you;" and soon after he rose to go, in the full persuasion that Katie had discovered his previous engagement to Millicent, without knowing the cause of its being broken off—and if so, how must the noble-minded Katie despise him!

But Katie was far from doing so—her pity was all excited, and, whatever misunderstanding had arisen between Lord Fortescue and Millicent, she longed to set it right; but still, in Arthur's pale countenance and altered manner, she saw something more than a disappointment of hopes; she had experienced that to

the full extent herself, and this must arise from another cause. Kate began to fear it was some secret malady working slowly, but surely; and she could not bear to think of the pleasant companion of their summer days, and the excellent lord of his tenantry, languishing away in solitude.

Kate's thoughts, however, were destined that very day to be occupied with something worse than her fears for Lord Fortescue. In the afternoon, as she was going down the village, to see the old gardener, Crockton, Mr. Seymour overtook her; he looked anxious, and wanted his usual cheerful expression of countenance, as he said, "Miss Robertson, I have been trying to overtake you for some minutes, to prevent you going into the cottages of either of your poor *protegés*. I have heard with deep concern, only this morning, from Mr. Rowe, that a fever has broken out in our end of the village. Mrs. Blane, and one of Crockton's grandchildren, are both ill,

besides several others. I must beg you not to expose yourself to the contagion; I will take care of your poor families for you, and let you know how they go on."

"Oh, Mr. Seymour," exclaimed Kate, "the fever will not injure me! I never have any illness—poor Jessie and the Crocktons, I cannot bear to forsake them — it appears so cowardly to neglect my duty in time of distress; that is, just when they most require my assistance. I am ashamed of the little I do; and, instead of giving it up, I long to take more—you are not afraid of contagion?" she added.

"No," he replied—"the minister of religion must forget all fears; besides, it is wonderful how Providence watches over us; clergymen seldom fall a prey to any raging disorder—but you must not, indeed, run into any risk; think of your sorrow, if you were the means of carrying the infection to your sister—even should you be preserved."

"But, Mr. Seymour, there is the same risk with Mary."

"I can trust my child with God," he said, solemnly; "and let us hope that this fever will not spread."

Katie sighed; it was only a few days before that she had heard of her uncle Delamere's former curate dying of small-pox, and her fears for Mr. Seymour were painful. When she returned home, she could think of nothing else, till Clara's expressions of dread roused her. Since her return to Staplehurst, Katie had appeared quite changed in her manner towards Mrs. Robertson and Clara; she no longer contradicted and crossed her mamma, or was dictatorial and cold to Clara; and, instead of spending the greater part of her time in her own boudoir, she brought her drawing down stairs, and talked, as she drew, of her journeys, and the people she had met, to Mrs. Robertson's great pleasure and amusement; neither did she object to practise with Clara, but even proposed herself, to teach her the

basses of some duets, that they might play together; and offered to read with her sister some French books she had brought from Paris. There were times in which some of Kate's former warmth of manner broke forth in a sarcastic remark, particularly at any reference to Millicent, but she usually checked herself quickly; and, after such occasions, was more kind and attentive to her mother and sister than before. And, as Kate made Clara her companion, and endeavoured to interest herself in her pursuits, so Clara became less selfish and occupied with little disagreeables beneath her notice, and less inclined to listen to the gossip of her maid.

The fever, instead of decreasing, as Mr. Seymour had hoped and prayed, spread most rapidly. A little girl, belonging to Kate's Sunday class, died; and scarcely a day passed without the accounts growing worse. Mrs. Robertson made arrangements for Augustus and Fanny to pass their holidays with a friend,

instead of returning home. Clara would have joined them, but the lady, who had children of her own, was afraid to receive her. Never did Christmas approach so gloomily—it promised to be as dull as the former had been merry, at Staplehurst. Mr. Seymour toiled all day long with unceasing, unwearying attention from house to house; and the sufferers, as he approached their sick beds, compared his visits to those of an angel. And, at Horton, too, the fever was almost worse than at Staplehurst; a farming-man, at the Chase, died, after not many hours' illness, and the Sunday before Christmas, Mr. Graham fainted in the vestry, after morning service, and was brought home ill. Lord Fortescue nursed him, and took upon himself the care of the poor, and worked with scarcely less zeal than Mr. Seymour himself.

No clergyman could be procured to take Mr. Graham's duty on Christmas day, so St. Peter's was shut, and the whole parish

again gathered at Staplehurst; but it was a sad service—there was such a thick fog, that the church was almost dark; and the bells, which were ringing in the day, were stopped to toll for poor Mrs. Blane; she had, for some time past, entirely changed in her conduct to Jessie, and there is no doubt that Mr. Seymour's advice and instruction had been the means of effecting this alteration.

There were a great many people absent from church—some from fear of contagion, some watching by the sick beds of relations; Clara and Mrs. Robertson, too, were away—but Katie and her father were there; and Katie's fine voice and Lord Fortescue's were heard, firm and tearless, in "Hark, the herald angels sing," whilst many of the congregation were choked with sobs—for there was scarcely one in that little flock who had not a friend or relative suffering from the fearful malady. They were all remem-

bered in the prayers, and the intercession to be used in the time of sickness, was offered up; the sermon was solemn and beautiful, and Mr. Seymour bade them look up and rejoice in their sorrow, for the greater the need, the nearer was the helping hand.

There were no festivities; Lord Fortescue and the Robertsons, as usual, distributed Christmas dinners, but there were no merry-makings— no bright laugh, and cheerful song, around the Christmas log; mothers watched by their sleeping children, and elder sisters sat silently around the hearth, keeping the younger ones quiet and still; and in houses where the fever had not yet come, serious and foreboding voices were heard in solemn discussion; or frequently a whole family might be seen by the flickering fire-light in earnest supplicating prayer, the father beseeching that the doom might be averted from his treasured little ones.

And in the Robertson's drawing-room, the party was, indeed, gloomy; Katie tried in

vain to raise their spirits by singing their favourite songs, and talking of brighter days, and telling anecdotes of Italy; Mrs. Robertson did nothing but compare this Christmas with the last, when the house was full of visitors, and all was gaiety and mirth around; Mr. Robertson dozed away the evening; and Clara, who was dreadfully afraid of catching the fever, at last gave way to a fit of hysterics. How different was Katie now to what she had been! no look of annoyance, no expression of contempt—but she tried to cheer her sister, and divert her thoughts from their melancholy strain—and when at last her efforts failed, and Clara insisted upon going to bed, Kate remained with her till she seemed revived, and then, promising to come up to her again soon, went down stairs to accompany her papa to the servants' hall, that, by showing themselves, they might prevent the servants also becoming still more depressed by the entire absence of the family.

When Katie retired to rest, she thought more than usual of Mr. Seymour, and indulged in one look at the dear hand-writing, in her confirmation Bible — she had learned to love that book more than anything she possessed, and, instead of her last reading at night being some volume of poetry or travels, she pored intently over the pages of Holy Writ, and then put Everard Seymour's present under her pillow, that it might be the first study of her waking hours. Katie felt the more she read the more she longed to read, and it influenced her whole character; and yet she was not outwardly changed—and strangers still called her proud—but Katie was as humble as the teacher she so much revered—and could she be otherwise, for was not the change which she alone knew and felt effected by his influence? Ah, poor Katie! she shed many tears that night, when she thought of the regard she felt for Everard Seymour!

After Christmas, every one watched and longed for frost to come and blow away the epidemic which still continued to rage; but the weather was mild and damper than it had been known for many years. Clara and Mrs. Robertson were almost afraid to venture beyond the park-gates, for fear of breathing the air of the village; but Kate took her daily rides with her father, and employed the time in her studies with as much zeal as usual.—About a week after Christmas, when Katie came in from a walk, she found the village doctor, Mr. Rowe, in the drawing-room with her mamma and sister. Clara had a cold, and persisted that it was the fever coming on, till the doctor assured her to the contrary. "Well, Miss Robertson," he said, "and so you are courageous enough to walk out still?"

"Oh, yes," she replied; "I am not the least afraid; I have been up towards Westworth, and am weather-wise enough to fancy the wind is changing."

"I wish it were; I am sure things are getting worse, instead of better," said Mr. Rowe; "though at Horton there is an amendment, decidedly: you see, it is higher, and has more of the fresh air from the hills; but in the village, here, the suffering is deplorable."

"Is Mr. Graham recovering?" asked Mrs. Robertson.

"Oh, rapidly; he never had it very badly; and I hope, in a week or two, he will be able to go to his brother, at Gloucester, for change. You can form no idea of the care Lord Fortescue has taken of him, nor of the hard work he has done in his district. He is a wonderful young man."

"But do you not think, Mr. Rowe, that he has altered terribly since the autumn," said Kate.

"I never saw such a change; it is something quite unnatural; for there is no reason why he should lose his strength and spirits in such an extraordinary manner; he has put me

very much lately in mind of Mrs. Heyward—she pined almost imperceptibly; just in that way, only more patiently and submissive, while her son seems almost reckless in the manner he spends his strength in exertions far beyond his powers. Mr. Seymour and I both warned him to keep out of the way of this sickness; but he seems happiest in the midst of his people. He said, he likes to share their troubles as well as their happiness—but I confess, I tremble for him; for, if once he takes the fever, it will go very hard with him. I do not know any one I watch with more interest, for I have known him from a child; but really, he is something like his cousin, Mr. Seymour, almost too good for us; such people as those seemed to me raised a step above the world."

"Oh, do not say that, Mr. Rowe," said Katie, smiling, though she shuddered as she spoke; "what would the world be, if you were to take away all the good ones from it?"

"True, Miss Robertson. Well, ladies, I must hurry away; Miss Clara, you will be quite well to-morrow, I assure you—but, I forgot," he said, pausing again—"I should have told you, our village rosebud is down, not badly, but still she is attacked."

"Not dear little Mary, surely?" asked Kate, anxiously.

"Yes, she is, Miss Robertson; poor Mrs. Seymour seems to feel it very much—but I have no fear for her, though her recovery much depends upon being well nursed, and that is the worst part of the business, for her own maid has gone home to take care of a brother; many would readily come in her place, but Mary does not like a stranger, and Mr. Seymour will not bring any one into a risk; besides, it is not an inexperienced person we want, but some one who understands the child, and would care for her thoroughly; it is not at all fit for the old lady to be sitting up with her night and day—it would wear her out very quickly."

"Then you think Mary is not in any danger, and that if she has a good nurse, all will go well?" asked Katie.

"Decidedly," he replied, and then wished them good morning.

Kate followed Mr. Rowe into the hall, and, as he was opening the door, she said—"Mr. Rowe, do you think I could take care of Mary Seymour?"

"You run the risk of catching the fever? oh, Miss Robertson, we cannot afford to have you ill!"

"I do not think the fever would hurt me; but could you trust her to me?" asked Kate, rather coldly.

"Trust her to you?—why, Miss Robertson, I would trust you with any one," said Mr. Rowe, looking at her a little surprised; "there is not another young lady in all the neighbourhood, of whom I entertain so high an opinion."

"Thank you," said Katie, with rather a contemptuous smile; "I will not keep you,

Mr. Rowe;" and Katie returned to the drawing-room—and, to the surprise and dismay of her mamma and sister, said it was her wish to go and nurse little Mary. Of course, as she had expected, there was a storm of opposition; but Katie combated all their objections—not as she would formerly have done, but still with the firm resolve of not yielding; Mary was her god-child, and she felt called to her by the ties of duty as well as of love; and, in less than an hour from Mr. Rowe's departure, Katie Robertson was on her way to the Rectory. And, while she had been talking in the drawing-room, Mr. Seymour was toiling in his parish, faithfully fulfilling his duty to his parishioners, though his heart was with his child, and longing to be by her side. As he walked home that evening, after an arduous time among his flock, the thought of his Mary—his only child—ill, and with no one who understood her, to nurse her, but his aged mother, who seemed almost incapable of the

toil and fatigue—harassed and distressed him; but he tried to cast this care where he had laid all the rest. As he opened the door of the Rectory, he entered noiselessly, lifting up his heart in prayer for his child; he mounted the stairs, and went directly to the nursery; it was only partially light, as the lamp, which was shaded, was placed as far as possible from the bed—and there, he saw some one sitting; he knew it was not his mother, but thought it might be one of the servants relieving Mrs. Seymour in her care; but, to his surprise, on approaching, he saw his darling Mary with her head resting in Miss Robertson's arms. She was uneasy and restless, but she raised herself up, as he came in, and said—"Papa, Aunt Katie is come!" There was a contentment in the tone, as if 'Aunt Katie' could make everything right, and little Mary well again.

"Miss Robertson," said Mr. Seymour, as he pressed her hand warmly, "this is, indeed,

good of you; but I am grieved you should have come into such a risk."

"Oh, do not think of that," said Katie; "but if you will allow me, I have come to take care of Mary, till she is well again."

Mr. Seymour felt more grateful than he could express, especially, as little Mary appeared so perfectly happy in having Kate to care for her; and Katie seemed to have forgotten everybody and everything but her little charge; with indefatigable love, she watched the child—carried her up and down the room in her arms and tried to hush her to sleep; but to Katie's sorrow the fever increased, and little Mary became delirious; night after night did Katie spend by her side, not thinking of her own rest, and in the day, when Mrs. Seymour wished to remain with Mary, with her usual energy she assisted in the care of the household, and arranged the accounts of the charities of which Mrs. Seymour was treasurer; in that way sparing her all trouble, for the anxiety

respecting little Mary, Katie thought sufficient for Mrs. Seymour, and the dear old lady told her son that she did not know how she could do without Katie, and praised her good qualities loudly; but Mr. Seymour saw very little of her, as Katie never put herself in his way, indeed she almost shunned his society, for knowing how she felt towards him, she would not appear even to herself to be intruding upon him.

And so, many days passed, and each day, Mary grew worse; everyone began to despair but Katie, who would now not even allow Mrs. Seymour to share her watchings. Mr. Rowe prepared Mr. Seymour for the worst; prepared him for the loss of his baby child who was twined so closely around his affections; but still Katie hoped—her presence was a great comfort to every one—there was a kind superiority in Kate, to which all yielded, in fact, she exercised over that household the influence that a superior mind always possesses.

But of course, Mr. Seymour, was not included, though he began at times to consult her opinion and seemed as if his gratitude for her care of Mary could not be expressed. Lord Fortescue, came every day to the Rectory, to enquire after his little playfellow; the fever had left Horton, and Mr. Graham, had gone home convalescent to his family, so he was relieved of a great anxiety, but Kate and Mr. Seymour, deplored his worn expression of extreme fatigue and begged him to leave for change and recreation, but he would not hear of it; and each morning as he came in, he seemed more wasted and weak, and once or twice when he had entered and found no one in the drawing-room, Kate had discovered him asleep in an arm-chair, and her eyes filled with tears as she marked the alterations a few months had caused.

It was about the middle of January, and still no cold or frost, when one evening, as Mr. Seymour was returning home, a fresh,

brisk wind blew in his face, coming sharp and cold from the Westworth hills; every one he met remarked it with joy; he, too, was thankful, though his heart was heavy, for he knew not if his little Mary's sweet voice would ever greet him again. He entered the house tremblingly, and opened the drawing-room door, not expecting to see any one there, but to his surprise, Kate Robertson came towards him; there was an absence of all fear, all care on her handsome countenance, and he knew by that look, by the very fact of her being there, that his child was safe.

"Oh, Mr. Seymour," she exclaimed, "I have been watching for you at least an hour, to be the first to tell you the joyful news;" she spoke quite cheerfully, and Mr. Seymour listened with breathless interest, as she added—"Our darling Mary is quite safe; directly you went, there came a change, and she has slept soundly ever since; Mr. Rowe says there is nothing to fear now."

Who could express Mr. Seymour's grateful expressions of praise—who could describe the prayer which he poured forth in that very room, and to which Katie listened with such deep reverence? Could words tell of the joy with which he next beheld his little one—not tossing and moaning beneath that fearful fever, but sleeping placidly and gently? And what were Katie's feelings, when he thanked her with tears in his eyes, and said he could never forget her kindness and care? Mr. Rowe could not praise Kate too highly, but declared that if all the sick had only had nurses like Miss Robertson, the fever would not have spread; and he told Mr. Seymour that it was entirely owing to her that little Mary recovered, and that he had nothing at all to do with it; Kate heard him coldly, and seemed too proud to like praise.

Winter appeared at last to have come in earnest, frosts and sharp winds set in, and the fever disappeared beneath their rigorous in-

fluence, to the joy of the whole parish. And now, Lord Fortescue had no longer the anxiety of sickness among his tenantry—his care was directed in supplying them with the extra comforts the inclemency of the weather required; he even made arrangements for sending those who had suffered most, to the sea for change of air. And thither the Seymours and Katie removed in February, Mr. Seymour coming backwards and forwards to them; but, before they left, there was another Thanksgiving service at Staplehurst.

CHAPTER VIII.

'It is a dream . . . . a waking dream,
A blissful certainty, a vision bright,
Of that rare happiness, which even on earth
Heaven gives to those it loves.'

It was impossible to come in intimate contact with Katie, and see how nobly she had acted, exposing herself in the very breath of a malignant fever, which was destroying many as young and bright as herself, without becoming more than commonly attracted towards her. Mr. Seymour had long felt great interest in the noble girl, and the more he associated with her, the more this interest deepened, but it

was not till she returned home, after her residence with them, that he really knew how much he valued her. Mrs. Seymour, also, had become so attached to Katie, that she was quite distressed at her departure, and little Mary did nothing but ask why "Aunt Katie" might not come and live with them always.

A month had passed since they parted with Katie, and Mr. Seymour was one day talking to his mother about having a governess for Mary, when she said suddenly, "Everard, I wonder you have never thought of marrying; you want some one to be interested in your parochial labours, and to give Mary a mother's attention and care; I am getting an infirm old woman, and fast treading the down hill of life, and would willingly give up my authority into the hands of your wife."

"And who, dear mother, would you wish me to choose?" said Mr. Seymour, smiling, for he fancied he knew well upon whom his mother's thoughts were dwelling.

"Oh, that rests with yourself, of course, Everard," replied the old lady.

"But is there no one you would prefer, supposing I wished to consult you?" asked Mr. Seymour.

"I know perfectly well what you are wishing," she said, laughing, "you want me to name Kate Robertson, because you are aware of my partiality to her; I could not like any one more amiable and worthy of esteem, than she is."

"I quite agree with you," replied Mr. Seymour, "and Miss Robertson is certainly the only person I have ever thought of as your daughter."

"Then, you have thought of her! But you are so quiet about every thing, that it is impossible to know what you feel—but seriously, Everard, have you any intention of making Kate your wife?"

"If she will accept me;" Mr. Seymour answered thoughtfully, "though, do you think

she would like our quiet life, after her gay and cheerful home ?"

"You cannot tell, till you have asked her, Everard," replied Mrs. Seymour, "But I am sure our Katie would make an excellent clergyman's wife—I remarked that, when she stayed with us."

"I always thought Miss Robertson one of the finest characters I had ever seen, for a person of the world," said Mr. Seymour, "but since her return from the continent, the only grace wanting, I have noticed she has received from above; and in choosing her, I feel convinced I shall find a friend and companion, who will enter into and love the blessed work in which I am employed."

"Well then, Everard, if you are certain tha Katie will prove all you can wish, why delay making known to her your attachment; you would be much happier, and so should we all, if we had her with us."

"You are right, I am sure we should," he

replied. Long and earnestly did Mr. Seymour think over this conversation with his mother, and after a prayerful consideration, he came to the determination of declaring to Katie, on the first opportunity, his wish of making her his wife.

It was some days after this that Katie came to call at the Rectory. She knew Mrs. Seymour was out, for she had met her with Mary, driving to Stocklee, in Lord Fortescue's carriage; but Kate was, just then, very busily occupied in trying to get Jessie Blane into an asylum for the blind, and came in a great hurry to consult Mr. Seymour about some of the arrangements, so she desired the servant to say she was there, and sat down quietly in the drawing-room to await him. Mr. Seymour joined her instantly and entered, (if it were possible,) even more kindly, and with greater interest than usual into her plans. Katie had much to ask him; it was almost decided that Jessie was to be received into a

London asylum; Katie had undertaken to pay the expenses attendant on the journey, but there was some one to be engaged to accompany her, and several other things to be arranged. At last, however, this was satisfactorily settled, and Kate rose to go; Mr. Seymour also rose, but instead of wishing her good-bye, he began—"If you are not very much pressed for time, Miss Robertson, would you remain a few minutes longer, that I may make known to you my wishes on a subject I have been intending to mention from day to day."

Katie sat down again, wondering what Mr. Seymour had to say, so little did she know or imagine his real feeling towards her. Mr. Seymour continued standing, leaning against the mantel-piece, as he said, "It is now more than a month since we parted from you, after your noble kindness to my little Mary."

"Oh, do not mention that," interrupted Katie, still far from understanding the happi-

ness that was about to break upon her; "it was my pleasure to take care of Mary. I knew I ran no risk from the fever, for I am never ill."

"Still the danger was just as great," said Mr. Seymour; "but it is not of your devotedness to Mary that I would now speak; my thanks and gratitude for that I can never express by words; but what I have on my mind at this present time, is something of great moment to myself. Miss Robertson, it would contribute much to my happiness, as well as that of my family, if you could consent to make my house your home. It is long since this has been my wish, but I forbore speaking to you before, thinking our quiet life might not suit your tastes and feelings; but, now, I can no longer refrain from offering you my love and esteem, and, if you can accept them, my life will, indeed, be made happy."

Katie could scarcely understand—scarcely realize his meaning; the sudden announce-

ment was almost overpowering—all her tears, her sorrow—her repressed love, that at times was almost unbearable, were at once dispersed.

Everard Seymour loved her—had even asked her to be his wife! Katie never gave way to her feelings, though now she longed to burst into tears; but she became very pale, and pressed her rings tightly against her fingers—as she always did when agitated—and her voice was almost inaudible, as she replied, "I will try to fulfil all you expect and wish of me, and, with your assistance, I may hope to live an useful and happy life; and, if you can trust me, it will be my privilege to assist you with the poor, and in the care of dear Mary. You spoke just now, Mr. Seymour, of being grateful to me; but, indeed, it is I who owe you the greatest possible debt of gratitude; you first taught me to look for hopes and pleasures beyond this earth, and by your influence and example, my new desires were strengthened. When I was in London, at

school, I heard several clergymen preach of holy lives and good works; but, when I found they did not practise their own doctrines, I ceased to care for religion altogether; and, but for you —oh, Mr. Seymour, I dare not think what I should have been!" Katie raised her beautiful dark eyes, and they met his, fixed on her with an expression of intense, earnest interest; and, as she ceased, he exclaimed—"God be praised, my prayers are answered!"

"Did you, then, pray for me, Mr. Seymour?" she asked, eagerly.

"Night and morning have I prayed fo you, Kate," he answered.

"Oh, Mr. Seymour," exclaimed Kate, "I have done the same! you cannot tell how earnestly I prayed for my pastor and his church during the time I sojourned in a foreign land; intercessions were also offered up by the sweet Grace, of whom I told you so much; and your sermons and conversations which I

had carefully treasured, were a comfort to that angel girl—oh, Mr. Seymour, I think I should cease to wish for anything more, could I only resemble you!"

"Do not talk about resembling me, dear Kate," he said, gently; "you do not know the sorrow nor the struggles against evil which almost overwhelm me."

"I recollect," replied Katie, "Lord Fortescue was speaking about you one evening, and when Millicent observed how proud you ought to be of your goodness, he answered, that he knew you would say just the contrary, though he, poor fellow, said you have been an angel to him!"

"Poor Fortescue!" sighed Mr. Seymour. "Kate, you must try and use your influence to cheer him; when we are married, we will have him as much as possible with us; he always liked you, and will be pleased to have you as a cousin. I do not mind telling you now, the reason of his desponding state. You

have not forgotten our conversation with Mr. Delamere about Mr. Heyward being deranged?"

"No," replied Katie; "but surely, Mr. Seymour, it cannot be possible that he inherits it?—I recollect well, how angry I was with Charles that night."

"You have been vehement in Fortescue's defence," Mr. Seymour answered, smiling, "and I admire you for it.—My poor young cousin is far from exhibiting any symptoms of his father's fearful malady; but he has accidentally discovered the cause of his death, and imagines the disease to be hereditary, and I fear this fancy is decidedly affecting his health. Your sex has always much more tact in cheering and comforting than we men—Katie, it will be doing the greatest possible kindness to rouse and amuse him—and now," continued Mr. Seymour, "with your parents' consent, I should like our marriage to be shortly—I feel daily the want of your presence here—

would this day month be too soon: it is my dear mother's seventieth birthday, and I know the greatest happiness I could then give her, would be to present her with a daughter whom she already loves."

"We will ask papa, and mamma," replied Katie, colouring.

Just at that moment the servant came to tell her master, a gentleman was waiting to speak to him in the study. And so the conversation was terminated. Mr. Seymour, had intended walking home with Katie, and applying at once for Mr. Robertson's consent, but this was prevented. And Katie, instead of returning immediately with her joyful news, went to Jessie Blane, and to the person who was to be her companion, and planned and thought of everything for the blind girl's comfort—Katie had indeed, learned unselfishness of Everard Seymour. But when it was all arranged, she turned towards the park, walking very fast, for she longed to be in her own room, where she

might think quietly over her eventful visit to the Rectory; but when she entered the house, Kate reflected she ought first to acquaint her parents; it was painful and disagreeable and she would rather have avoided doing so, but Katie considered this her duty, and was too conscientious to shrink from it.

She went, therefore, at once into the drawing-room, though she scarcely expected to find her father there, as he was usually out of doors in fine weather; but when she opened the door, she saw him talking to her Mamma and Clara —the two latter having just returned from a drive.

"Why, my Katie," exclaimed Mr. Robertson, "what have you been doing all this afternoon? I declare, I began to think you had gone to London yourself, with this blind friend of yours."

"How dreadfully warm your face looks, Katie," exclaimed Clara; "what is the matter?"

"Do not be so absurd!" said Kate, quickly,

then checking herself, she added to her sister, who was leaving the room ; " stay here, Clara, you must all hear it,"—and going up to her father, the one she always loved best, she put her arm over his shoulder, and said coaxingly:

" Dear papa, could you spare me to be married next month ?"

" My Katie, what is this !" exclaimed her father, while Mrs. Robertson, caught up her words in breathless interest—" Married next month, Katie !"

"Yes, mamma," she replied; " I know neither you nor papa will have any hesitation in giving me to Mr. Seymour."

" My own dear Katie !" said her father, putting his arm round her waist, and kissing her blushing face. " Yes, I will spare the best and handsomest girl in the county to the man who, of all others, I would have chosen for her. But how did it all come about, Katie —let us hear it ?"

" Papa, I need not tell you how unexpected

this is," replied Katie. "I can say, truthfully, that I never knew Mr. Seymour ever thought of me, much less, that he intended to ask me to share his home; but this afternoon, when I went about poor Jessie, he told me all. Dear mamma, you do not object?"

"My dear, certainly not; it is a very good marriage," answered Mrs. Robertson; who, however, would much rather that Lord Fortescue had been her future son-in-law.

"Are you to be married in a month, Katie?" asked Clara.

"Mr. Seymour wishes it," replied Katie, going towards the open glass door leading on to the lawn, where the gardener was just taking in the plants, he had placed out of doors to enjoy the April showers and sunshine. The soft air blew on her face with refreshing coolness, and the song of the birds among the tall trees sounded sweetly.

Oh! Katie was so happy at that moment! In a month, she, who had sorrowed and hoped, would be Katie Seymour!

At that moment the drawing-room door was thrown open, and Mr. Seymour was announced. While Katie had been hurrying about the village, he had listened to and dismissed his visitor, and then instantly set off for the Park, to acquaint Mr. and Mrs. Robertson with his offer to their daughter.

Poor Katie! directly she heard his name, was out on the balcony; and, going through the shrubberies, entered the house by the back way; and, running up stairs to her boudoir, went in and locked the door. She had thought, when she was alone, she should give way to tears; but Katie could not cry now—she knelt down, and thanked God for having sent her this great joy, and prayed that she might prove a good wife to Everard Seymour.

Katie might indulge herself now in looking at the writing in her confirmation Bible; and she pressed it to her lips, and rejoiced again and again over the words, over which she had shed so many tears; and then she opened the

Book, and read the three last Psalms of praise, and thought how wrong she had been, ever to despair or repine.

Katie did not know how long she had been thus reflecting, when some one knocked at the door. She instantly rose and opened it, and there was Clara, dressed for dinner.

"Are you not ready, Katie? the first bell rang long ago; and Mr. Seymour is to dine with us. You have only two or three minutes —let me assist you."

"Thank you, Clara," said Katie, "I cannot imagine why I did not hear the bell."

"But I can," replied Clara; "Katie, do you know I am glad, and yet sorry you are going to be married; of course I am glad for your sake, and I am sure for mamma's also, for she has been fidgetting herself for the last four years about getting you off—but I think, *entre nous*, she is rather disappointed that you are not to become a *peeress*—she had entirely set her mind on having Lord Fortescue for her son-in-law."

"But I told mamma, I could not accept him even did he care for me," exclaimed Katie.

"Still she hoped that it might come about some day; but, Katie, to hear Mr. Seymour speak of you just now; you could not have a more affectionate husband—fancy, it is to be when he wished: mamma objected at first, on the plea of preparations, but he managed to get his own way. Mr. Seymour is very like you in some things. Will you put on your blue dress, Kate? You must let me wear pink on the wedding-day; twelve bride's-maids in pink and white would have such a good effect! Miss Manvers and I ought to walk together; we are so much of the same height, but of course I shall hold the glove?"

"Oh, Clara, please do not agitate me so much, or I shall never be dressed!"

"Well then, I will not," said Clara; "do you know, Kate, I love you a hundred times better than I used, everything has seemed so

different since you have helped me to study, and let me walk with you; I do not seem such a useless creature as formerly—how dull I shall be when you are gone; I am sorry for myself."

"But, Clara, I shall be so near, there will be no separation," replied Katie, and she kissed Clara affectionately, and thanked her for assisting her to dress; and then the sisters descended, arm in arm, to the drawing-room. Mr. Seymour was the only person down, he was reading by the table, but he got up when the two girls came in and talked to them both, indiscriminately, to Katie's great relief, who still looked very flushed and held Clara's hand in hers. Mr. Seymour paid no marked attention to Katie that would agitate her; but once when he was standing alone by her side, and she addressed him as 'Mr. Seymour,' he told her, that was to be his name no longer, for the future he was to be 'Everard,' to her. How strange Katie felt that night when she retired to rest, after the excitement of the day! She

had to think a long time before she could realize that it was not all a dream; there had been no long courtship, nothing even to lead her to suppose Everard liked her, on the contrary, Katie had never thought herself worthy of gaining his affections, and now, quite suddenly, without any preliminary step, she was his! Yes, he had called her his own Katie, scarcely an hour ago: Katie did not dream about it, but she certainly fell asleep in tears.

What an excited state of bustle and preparation, poor Mrs. Robertson was in for the following month! Kate and Mr. Seymour begged for a quiet wedding, but Mrs. Robertson insisted on her eldest daughter having a large gathering of friends and relatives. Tom, who had been staying with the Delameres all the winter, was to bring them back with him to the Park. Kate's schoolfellow, Agnes Manvers, who was also a cousin of Lord Fortescue, and all Mrs. Robertson's grand acquaintance, were invited. Kate's *trousseau* was to be some-

thing surpassing any other that had ever been made; a French milliner, from London, was employed in the house, besides the numberless dresses and finery sent for from Paris. The only drawback to Kate's perfect happiness was the absence of her dear Millicent, who was still travelling about with the Merediths. Kate had heard from her very frequently, but could only reply now and then, as the Meredith's movements were so uncertain, that Millicent was not always able to give her their next address. In Millicent's last letter, written before Kate's engagement, she said they were going to Spain, and since then she had not written; so Kate was unable to inform her of her approaching marriage.

All the villagers were delighted at Mr. Seymour's choice, and many were the congratulations he received. As to Mrs. Seymour and Mary, it was difficult to decide which was most overjoyed; and Lord Fortescue, too, smiled, as he told Katie how charmed he

should be with his new cousin. She and Mrs. Seymour saw, with pleasure, an improvement in his spirits; Katie's engagement occupied his mind, and he formed many plans with her for various amusements he proposed giving his tenantry during the summer.

What a happy wedding-day was Katie's, the sun shone brightly as she looked out in the early morning; she was glad for others besides herself, for the school children and villagers feast in the Park, and Katie would have grieved, had they been disappointed. She looked very beautiful in her white moiré dress, and Brussels veil, but quiet and dignified, as usual; when her toilette was finished, she told the maid to leave her for a little time, and taking her mother's hand in hers, she begged her to forgive all her pride and coolness, and all that had in any way ever distressed her. Mrs. Robertson was very much affected, but Katie shed no tears, although at that moment she looked rather sad; but just

then, Tom knocked at the door, saying he wanted to see her quietly, that he might judge of the effect. "You do indeed, look like a queen, Katie," he exclaimed, "ah well, I intend to marry soon myself, and I only hope my bride will look as elegant as you do." "Dear Tom," said Katie, smiling, "I should like to see your bride." But Tom only laughed, and hurried away.

The bells rang all the morning, louder and merrier than they had long since done, and the old church was crowded with villagers, to see "our clergyman's new lady." She quite answered all their expectations, with her six brides-maids; first came Clara and Miss Manvers, then Bessie and Rosamond, and Fanny, with little Mary, all in pink and white; Tom, Lord Fortescue, Captain Seymour, and Charles Delamere, with Augustus Robertson, were groomsmen. The old Dean performed the service, united his niece, Katie, to him she loved more than anything earthly,

and then the bells struck up another merry peal. As Katie was leaving the vestry, little Mary put her arms round her, and said, in her sweet lisping voice, "Mamma, dear mamma," Katie's eyes filled with tears, but she quickly recovered her smiles for the children, who strewed spring flowers in her path. When Mr. Seymour had put her into the carriage, he said, "Katie, it is blessed to think we can never be separated."

"No, Everard," she replied, "never—for we both love the same Heaven."

"And, therefore, we shall have more love on earth," he added.

Everard and Katie had not planned a long wedding tour—they were only to be absent a fortnight at the Lakes, so there was no lengthened parting between Katie and her family—but the most affecting occurrence that day, was the wedding gift of the villagers, who had all subscribed their pence and purchased a silver inkstand, which was presented by the

oldest inhabitant, who could recollect four generations of Seymours—an aged man, of ninety-seven, bent with years, and whose grey hairs hung down on his shoulders; every one was more or less affected at the sight. The farmers, too, were not behind in their testimonials, for they had purchased a handsome salver; and both that and the inkstand bore an inscription, expressing the parishioners' respect and gratitude. And so, the Pastor of Staplehurst left with his bride, amidst the blessings and love of all; and well did he merit them, for it had been his daily endeavour 'to visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.'

CHAPTER VIII.

'A fire is in his heart and brain,
And Nature hath no healing for his pain.'
SOUTHEY.

WHEN Katie was settled in her new home—the Rectory—according to her husband's request, she had Lord Fortescue frequently with her; Arthur was very grateful for his new cousin's attention, and real sisterly kindness, as his former energy appeared to be entirely failing him, and he found it very pleasant to sit in Kate's cheerful drawing-room, or to drive her about in her pony-chair. During the Seymour's wedding tour, Arthur had commissioned

his cousin, Miss Manvers, to choose a beautiful piano for him in London, as a surprise for Kate on her return; and in Mr. Seymour's library was a new book-case, filled with a collection of valuable works, which the self-denying clergyman had long wished for, but refrained from purchasing. There were various little improvements in the garden, which Lord Fortescue's thoughtful consideration had devised; and both Kate and Mr. Seymour were pleased with these delicate marks of attention and love. Mr. Seymour thanked Kate for her attention to Arthur, whose increasing delicacy of health caused him much uneasiness—sometimes he almost feared, though he never said so, even to his wife, that Arthur was gradually fading away, as his mother had done; he begged him to have medical advice, but Lord Fortescue appeared to dread the idea, always declaring that he really was not ill.

One lovely evening, Katie had been walking

with Arthur in the garden for some time, and he was conversing animatedly about some lectures that were being delivered for the working-classes at Stocklee, when suddenly he exclaimed—"Oh, Kate!" and dropping down into a garden-seat, he fainted away. Katie was very much alarmed, especially as her husband was out; but Mrs. Seymour came to her assistance, and presently he revived. Lord Fortescue treated his sudden illness very lightly, and attributed it to the fatigue of a long walk he had taken that morning; but Katie thought it required something more than the exertion of a walk to cause a man to faint away. She made him come into the house and rest till Mr. Seymour returned, who was quite distressed at his attack, and begged him not to return to the Chase that night; but Lord Fortescue would not hear of remaining, and Mr. Seymour drove him back very much exhausted and tired, but trying all the while to appear cheerful. When Lord

Fortescue came home that evening, he found among the letters awaiting him, one from a French Protestant *pasteur*, with whom his uncle and himself had been intimately acquainted during their sojourn abroad. Monsieur Vaubert, who resided in a small village about thirty miles from Paris, begged Lord Fortescue, in his summer travels, to come and visit him. He said how ardently he desired to see Arthur, who had been his pupil for more than a year, and growing old, as he then was, he could not hope to live much longer, to meet his '*cher milord.*'

Arthur was much pleased with the affectionate tone of the letter, and almost made up his mind that night, to take a speedy journey to S——. He could not hide from himself the increasing weakness of his health, and the change of place and scene might, he hoped, recruit his failing strength. How often, during his solitude, he longed for Millicent, himself alone knew. At one time, he blamed himself

severely for having given her up; at another, he rejoiced that she did not share his sorrow; but a day never passed in which he did not think how it would delight him to see her once more. The dreadful idea of impending insanity, which at first had taken such possession of him, had much subsided, though sometimes it recurred with all its force, and then he gave way to an agony of supplications and prayer, that such a terrible fate might be averted. In proportion as his fears declined, so the longing to see Millicent increased to an almost painful degree, with a restless desire to travel about on the continent, if by any chance he might meet her.

The Seymours were very glad when Lord Fortescue told them on the following morning that he intended to accept Monsieur Vaubert's invitation. It was lovely June weather, and all things seemed propitious for a little tour. Kate thought it might be the means of benefiting his health; and as Mr. Seymour wished

to go to London to see his brother, he and Kate accompanied Arthur thus far on his journey; and, after many injunctions to John to take every care of his master, they parted.

It seemed strange to Lord Fortescue to be again travelling the same route over which he had so often passed with his uncle, and under very different circumstances; then, he was full of activity and strength — now, he felt weary and ill, and indulged in a train of mournful reflections. He appeared to have been the child of sorrow from the time of his earliest remembrance till now—life had never been buoyant—never gladsome; and, with the exception of the summer months of that happy year that had passed, he had seldom shared in the amusements and pleasures of youth. There were many people also journeying the same way, but Lord Fortescue's natural shrinking and reserve prevented him entering into conversation with strangers, and so, he pursued his solitary way, growing each

stage less inclined for exertion and fatigue.

A few hours before Lord Fortescue arrived in Paris, he really began to feel very ill—strange fancies and visions crowded upon his mind, and his ideas seemed perfectly confused; he could not think for two minutes together on the same subject, and, had any one addressed him, he felt as if it would be almost impossible to answer them. Then came the horrid thought, that this was at last the hour which he had dreaded in his dreams, as well as in his waking moments. His father's insanity was coming upon him, and he within a few miles of that very city where his unfortunate parent had met with his fearful end; he leant back and closed his eyes, as if to prevent those overpowering sensations.

It was late in the evening, and the stars shone brightly in the clear heavens; there were two other persons in the carriage, and they were admiring the brilliancy of the night. Lord Fortescue, interrupted in his melancholy reflec-

tions by their expressions of rapture, bent forward to the window. The cool refreshing night air blew on his face, and revived him a little; and, as he gazed at the spangled heavens, the verse—'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' recurred to his mind. "I thank Thee, oh, Father!" he whispered, faintly, while his eyes were suffused with tears; "Thou wilt not leave me.—Then nothing can harm me. Yes, even though what I dread does overtake me, God will not leave me long in it, but call me away to Himself—oh, Heaven is far happier than earth!" And so he consoled himself, young though he was, with the thoughts of death. It seemed sad—but he looked upon death, not as an avenging and destroying angel, but as a spirit of peace, opening to him the portals of Heaven, where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'

When the train stopped at the terminus at Paris, and John came to his master, Lord For-

tescue had recovered a little, though he seemed heavy and drowsy, and anxious to get as soon as possible to the Hôtel du Rhin; yet he scarcely appeared to care where he was taken, so long as he entered at once into a carriage, which was to convey him to some place of rest.

John began to feel alarmed, but Lord Fortescue said, he was only fatigued, and tomorrow he should be well again; and, telling John not to call him too early, he endeavoured to compose himself to sleep. He was too weary even to think, but he tossed about uneasily for some time before he fell into a slumber, and then he was haunted by terrible dreams. He imagined he was at Horton, aud walking in the grounds with his mother and Millicent; and, they were so alike, he scarcely knew one from the other, except that his mother looked careworn, and Miss Thornville smiled, and had a happy expression of countenance. And in his dream Arthur fancied he was to be married to her; and they were talking about their future

happiness, when some dark-looking men, with handcuffs, came across the grass, and tore him away. They said they were taking him to a madhouse; and, in spite of his mother's tears, and Millicent's assurances that he was of sound mind, they succeeded in hurrying him into a carriage; and the last thing he saw was Millicent lying senseless on the ground! He awoke with a loud cry, and, starting up, looked wildly around. The dream had such fearful vividness, that he fancied it reality; and it was not till John, who was standing by his bed-side, spoke in a soothing tone that he recovered his consciousness.

"John, are you there?" he exclaimed. "Where am I? Is this the Chase—and was my mother really here just now?"

"No, my lord, you are in Paris, at the hotel," replied John; "your lordship has been dreaming."

"Oh, was it a dream, only a dream? oh thank God for that," he murmured; "but, oh,

John, the heat is suffocating—bring me some cold water to put on my forehead, for it burns, and aches to an agony, and open the windows, the thermometer must be a hundred!"

"It is a very close night, my lord, but I did leave one window open at your express wish."

"Then open all the others, if you do not wish me to die of the heat—the fire at Eager's cottage was nothing to this;" and Lord Fortescue threw himself back perfectly exhausted.

John did open another window, and bathed his master's forehead, who seemed to find some relief, as he said:

"Oh, that is refreshing! thank you, John, I am afraid I spoke very hastily to you just now, but you must not mind, for I scarcely knew what I said, my head was torturing and I had the most frightful dream—do not go away again, John, I think I shall sleep presently and you might read to me something soothing —the ninety-first Psalm, that I may have

pleasant thoughts, and if I plunge about in my sleep, awake me, for I could not endure a repetition of such suffering."

John shaded the lamp that its light might not fall on his master and then began to read in a soft voice; Lord Fortescue repeated the words slowly after him till he came to the last verse but one:

"Stop now, John," he exclaimed; "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him—I will be with him in trouble'—don't read any more, now—if I remember that, I shall sleep in peace;" he pushed back his curtain that the air might come on his face and then Lord Fortescue slept again more calmly than before, though he breathed heavily, and several times put his hand to his head; but still he did not groan or start painfully and John sat by his side and watched him with great anxiety till about seven o'clock, when Lord Fortescue, again awoke.

"Are you still here, John?" he said; "how tired you must be—what o'clock is it?"

"Seven, my lord—is your lordship better?"

"Oh yes, John, I shall get up now, and then you must go and take some rest."

John assured his lord that he did not require rest, and begged him not to rise, but Lord Fortescue said he should prefer it. The fatigue of dressing, however, seemed to overpower him, and when he was ready, and sent John to fetch some coffee, he fell down insensible on the floor. It was very long, however, this time, before he could be recovered, and not only John, but a French doctor, who had been summoned, began to despair of his ever reviving. At length, after every remedy which could be thought of had been tried, to the unspeakable joy of John, his master did at last emerge from that dreadful stupor, but he was perfectly unconscious of any one's presence, and began to talk in an unconnected manner, about things long since passed. He spoke quickly, and in a tone of deep distress, of his mother, he begged and

entreated of his father not to illtreat her, clasping his hands, and looking up with an expression of agonized entreaty; then again, his thoughts seemed turned to Horton, and he appeared to fancy he was being expelled from the Chase, and humbly and earnestly he promised to do his duty to his tenantry, if he only might stay; but the idea that appeared most to haunt him, was, that every one had deserted him; it was in vain that John bent over him, and spoke gently and soothingly; his cries for John, for Everard, and for Katie, were piercing. "Oh, bring them to me," he called, "will no one come—shall I cry for ever, and no one hear me? oh, if Millicent were near, I need not call twice.—Millicent,—what am I saying?" he cried, and his voice was piteous in its tones. "I refused her, but it was not my fault; oh, I can never see her any more! every one has forsaken me, even my guardian angels are gone, I do not see them around my pillow!" and he fell back, sobbing in agonized bitterness.

"You must write to Lord Fortescue's relations," said the doctor, addressing John; "he is in a high fever—they must come to him immediately."

"His lordship has no very near relations; but I will send a letter at once to Mr. Seymour, my lord's cousin, and clergyman of Staplehurst; he is the greatest friend his lordship has—but will my master's illness be dangerous?" John asked with trembling anxiety.

"If the fever lasts long, it will be," replied the doctor; "but everything in my power shall be done. I knew your lord's father, Mr. Heyward—and, strangely enough, attended him in his last illness."—And, after making inquiries about the manner of Lord Fortescue's seizure, the physician told John he would remain with his master, while he wrote the letter to England.

Poor John—his letter was most simply touching!—

"Hôtel du Rhin, Paris,

"June —, 18—

"REVEREND SIR,

"It is with great sorrow I send you this letter, for it contains news that will make you as sad as it does me; my dear lord is very ill—he seems to have been ailing all the journey; but this morning he was attacked with a fever, and now he is quite delirious, and calls constantly for you and Mrs. Seymour (your lady, I mean). Please, do come soon, Reverend Sir—my dear master always looked so much to you. The doctor, who has come to him, talks English perfectly, so I can speak with him, which is a great comfort; and a very strange circumstance is, that he knew the late Mr. Heyward; he is waiting to post this letter for me himself, as he wishes it to go at once.—Please, make my humble respects to the ladies and Miss Mary—and, with every token of gratitude to you, Reverend Sir,

"I am, your obedient and humble servant,

"JOHN ADAMS."

Such was the note that was given to Mr. Seymour, as he returned from his short visit to London, on Thursday evening, with Kate. He looked very grave, as he read it, and then handed it to her; Katie, too, looked distressed, as she said—"Poor Fortescue! when he was at the Chase, I always fancied it would come to this at last—it was impossible to wear himself out, physically and mentally, as he did all the winter, and not feel the effects. Everard, we had better go to him at once."

"Yes, dear Kate, can you start as early as the nine o'clock train to-morrow morning?"

"Certainly, Everard, I can, whenever you are ready.—Poor Fortescue!" she said again; "I remember so well, Mr. Rowe saying to me last winter, 'in Lord Fortescue's weak state of health, if he takes the fever it will go hard with him.'"

"We must hope that this is not a serious attack; though, from John's letter, it appears

like brain fever; but we must leave him in the hands of God, my Katie."

Kate sighed, and, strangely enough, just then she thought of Millicent.

There were a great many arrangements to be made that night; Katie and Mr. Seymour went first up to the Park to acquaint the Robertsons with their sudden departure, and then, Mr. Seymour had to write to a friend to take his duty on the following Sunday. But, the next morning, quite early, they left the Rectory in Mr. Robertson's carriage, which was to take them to Stocklee: Tom and Rosamond (who was still staying at the Park) drove with them to the station, and talked in their usual style of nonsense and repartee, though at times they were checked by the thought of the dangerous, and, perhaps, fatal illness of their young neighbour and companion. All that day and night Mr. Seymour and Katie travelled, and about four o'clock on Saturday afternoon they entered Paris. It was with

anxious feelings that they sought the Hôtel du Rhin, and were shown up to Lord Fortescue's apartments: there was no one in the reception-rooms, so Mr. Seymour softly opened the bed-room door: it was darkened as much as possible; the jalousies were all closed, but every window was open to admit the air; the curtains of the bed were drawn aside, and there Mr. Seymour saw his young and dearly-loved cousin lying back on the pillows. He advanced gently across the room, followed by Katie; John was sitting by the bedside; his handsome face was shaded by almost the only sorrow he had ever known; but an expression of joy passed over it as he saw Mr. Seymour, and rose silently. Mr. Seymour shook hands with him, and Kate spoke some kind words to him in an undertone; for she knew how Everard respected John—and then she gazed sadly at the thin, worn countenance of the sufferer, flushed with the feverish heat, and his beautiful soft eyes looked brilliant, as if lighted by some unseen fire.

He was lying quite still just then, except that his hands moved restlessly about the coverlid, to find some cool spot on which to rest; but he was perfectly unconscious, and Kate glanced from him enquiringly to her husband. Mr. Seymour's face was very grave, and even melancholy, as he moved away and returned to the adjoining room; John came in and spoke a few words; the doctor, he said, had only just gone, and promised to come back in another hour, he seemed to consider the case a very bad one. John was going to tell them more, but he broke off suddenly, on hearing his master's voice, calling in a distressing voice for cold water. Mr. Seymour stood by the window, looking out at the busy crowd below, but his thoughts were not with them, he was commending Arthur to God, in silent prayer. Katie came up to her husband, and putting her hand in his, said in a low voice, "Everard, what do you think?"

"He seems as ill as he can possibly be, dear

Katie," he replied, and there were tears in his eyes as he spoke; "but dearest wife, I was just that moment thinking of the lines I heard you repeat only last Sunday, 'The greater aid our woes demand, the nearer is His helping hand.' This ought to comfort us in our sorsow, we know he has been well cared for, but I intend to sit up myself with him to night, poor John looks worn out."

"May I not help you, Everard?" asked Katie.

"Yes, Katie, to-morrow you shall watch, but you have had a fatiguing journey, and require rest; we must not waste our strength, but relieve each other, by that means we shall be better able to bear the constant, wakeful care our poor sufferer requires."

How strange it appeared to Kate on the Sunday, to hear the Sabbath morn ushered in with the ringing of bells so different to her dear Staplehurst; she could scarcely realize she was again in Paris, so sudden had their

journey been; and stranger was it, to read the service to herself, by the bed-side of poor Arthur, and be interrupted from time to time, with the wild fantasies which floated before his brain; now he spoke of angels, now of music, and in all he seemed to dwell upon going home, though not to an earthly home, but Heaven. His mother he spoke of in raptures, as soon to meet, but with her he always mentioned Millicent, and the thought seemed to distress him, and then he would cry, and sob, and long more to go "home." Kate sorrowed much, as she reflected on what Arthur had been, and prayed earnestly that he might recover, and that happiness might come to him, as it had to her, when she had least expected it; for Katie had now learned from her husband, to trust all in the hands of God.

CHAPTER IX.

'——————Oh! bear me up
Against the unutterable tenderness
Of earthly love;—my God! in the sick hour
Of dying human hopes, forsake me not!'

MRS. HEMANS.

MILLICENT, who had been carried away suddenly from Heatherton by the Merediths, on a long continental tour, had an easy and, but for her late deep sorrow, a happy life. Mrs. Meredith and Emily were the kindest and most agreeable companions imaginable. They both appeared to guess that Millicent had some secret trial, though they had too much deli-

cacy to inquire into the cause, and endeavoured by affection to make her forget it, whatever it might be.

Emily and Millicent both shared the same instructions, and enjoyed the same amusements; and Miss Meredith's companion was made the object of as much attention as Miss Meredith herself. Their tour had been very pleasant; and though Millicent had visited the continent before, still they made excursions to places hitherto unknown to her; and their final journey into Spain was entirely new. There, they had hurried from place to place; and Millicent found it impossible to write more than twice to Katie, and then she could give her no address; so that she did not know of Kate's marriage. But, strangely enough, on the very day Lord Fortescue entered Paris, the Merediths also came to remain there, a short time previously to starting on another tour; and, a few hours after Katie left the Rectory, a letter was sent there from the Park, addressed "Miss

Robertson," which was from Millicent; and so the two girls who had loved each other so fondly, and the governess and the young nobleman whose hopes had been wrecked on each other, were all, together with the pastor they revered, in the same city, and actually within a few streets of each other, yet they knew it not.

Emily Meredith and Millicent had joined a drawing-class shortly after their arrival; but the second lesson, Emily was prevented attending; and Millicent went with their maid, who was to call for her when it was over. Opening out of the room in which they drew was a studio full of beautiful paintings, and, the day being very warm, the door was left open to admit as much air as possible. Millicent happened to be placed near it, and, after she had been drawing a little while, she heard voices in the studio, and saw a young lady and a gentleman; they were English, and were waiting to speak to the artist, who was paint-

ing a picture for them. It appeared from their conversation that they were brother and sister. At first they conversed in an under tone, but by degrees it grew louder, till Millicent heard the sister say, "So you went to the Hôtel du Rhin this morning, after all."

"Oh, yes—I forgot to tell you about my visit," was the reply—"I called on Horace, and found him in."

"And had a long talk over your college days, no doubt," said the lady.

"Well—no; I think the principal subject of our conversation was one which is occupying every one in the hotel; and, Horace's rooms being exactly opposite the young nobleman's, he sees and knows all about it."

"About what?" asked the sister; "do tell me."

"The story is this—there happens to be an English nobleman, who arrived last week at the hotel, and fell ill, directly he got there,

with brain fever; he is very young—a mere boy, I believe—and has a handsome servant, who looks quite a gentleman, and cares for him like a brother; there is a report, that one saved the other in a fire, but I do not know which it was."

Millicent, who had hitherto overheard more than listened, now felt a trembling interest, and her pencil was motionless, as the gentleman continued, in answer to a question which Millicent did not hear—"Oh, yes, he has relations with him—a sister and her husband, I imagine—such a handsome couple; and, to add to the romance, they have not been married six weeks."

Millicent's suspicions were quieted—Lord Fortescue, whom she fancied the young nobleman must be, had no sister; but still her interest was excited, and she attended, as the lady said—"Are they young—this bride and bridegroom?"

"Yes—and she is the handsomest creature

you ever saw; they passed us on the stairs, as we were going down; her husband is a clergyman, and looks a person it would be a pleasure to know; there is quite a stamp of nobility on them both. He has no title, but Horace says he belongs to an old family—the Seymours, of Staplehurst."

"Then, this must be the very Mr. Seymour to whomGraham is curate; and I am learned enough to know who his bride is—a Miss Robertson, of Staplehurst Park; and the young nobleman, if I am not very much mistaken, is Lord Fortescue, cousin to my former schoolfellow, Agnes Manvers."

"How very strange!" exclaimed the gentleman. "Well, poor fellow, I am very sorry for him; old Doctor Millet gives scarcely a shadow of hope—his life, they say, hangs on a mere thread, and it was quite distressing to hear his cries, as we passed the door. Horace tells me, he calls constantly for a 'Millicent;' and he fancies the poor fellow has been dis-

appointed in love—though he appears almost too young for that kind of thing."

Millicent heard no more, she could not bear to listen—it was enough for her that Lord Fortescue was dying, and that he called for her. Katie was there, too, and she must go to her. Tearing a leaf out of her pocket-book, Millicent scribbled, hastily,—"Dear Emily, don't be alarmed at my not returning with Elise. I am going to the Hôtel du Rhin, some dear friends of mine have just arrived, under very sad circumstances.—Yours, Millicent." She twisted the note in her fingers, and then, rising, made an apology to the master for leaving. He was very busily engaged just then, and scarcely had time to notice her; but a whispered exclamation of "*Elle est bien malade!*" escaped from her companions, as she closed the door, as pale as the marble ornaments on the landing; and hastily descending the stairs, she gave the note to the porter to deliver to her maid when

she came, and then went out into the bustling street.

The mid-day sun was shining full upon the pavement, and Millicent felt quite dazzled by its bright rays; she was bewildered, too, by the number of people passing along, and, calling a *fiacre*, she got in, and told the man to drive to the Hôtel du Rhin. It was not five minutes' drive, but it appeared a long time to Millicent, occupied, as she was, with that one dreadful thought of Lord Fortescue dying and calling for her!

When they stopped before the hotel, she gave the man the first piece of money in her purse, and, without waiting for change, she entered the wide vestibule. At any other time, she would have been frightened at finding herself alone among a concourse of waiters and travellers, some coming in, and others going out, a train having just arrived. The entrance was doubly full and bustling, luggage being carried about, and passengers being

shown to their rooms; and there stood Millicent, almost unnoticed, among the bustle, and with but one object in view—that of finding Kate Seymour.

Just as she was looking round for some one to direct her, an elderly gentlman, with top-boots and a silver-headed cane, crossed the hall; he looked very kind and friendly, and, as he passed her, Millicent turned towards him with an inquiring expression. Seeing a young lady standing alone, looking forlorn and sad, he stopped, and asked if he could be of any service to Mademoiselle. Millicent thanked him, and said she had come to see some friends, but did not know the way to their rooms. Her new friend inquired their name, and when Millicent said, "Seymour," he exclaimed, "*Eh bien!*"—he was just going to their apartments, and, if Mademoiselle would accompany him, he would take her to Madame Seymour; and so Millicent followed up the broad staircase, and down the passages,

and people turned and looked after the lovely girl, in her simple morning dress, and admired as she passed; but Millicent did not heed them, she thought of nothing still, but the friends she was to meet again; and when, at last, her companion stopped at a door, and, knocking, opened it, without waiting to be admitted, Millicent saw, as he held it for her to enter, her beloved Katie sitting at a table, writing. She raised her head as the door opened, and Millicent brushed hastily by the good doctor, and, with one word,—"Katie!"—passing from her lips, she threw herself into her friend's arms, and, hiding her face on her shoulder, burst into tears.

Kate's surprise and astonishment were great—she looked first at Millicent, and then at Doctor Millet, thinking that he had something to do with Millicent's sudden appearance; and then, finding she continued to sob, Katie said, "You must not cry, my dear child, but tell me how you came here, I am quite

curious to know; besides, we are keeping Doctor Millet waiting."

Millicent instantly raised her head; "I will tell you all by and by," she whispered; "do not ask me now," and drawing back she waited anxiously to hear what was said about Lord Fortescue.

Doctor Millet spoke first, and said:—

"I hope you have better accounts for me, Madam."

Kate looked sad as she replied: "There appears no improvement, but still I hope."

"In his case that is all we can do," replied the Doctor, as he moved towards a door opening into another sitting-room.

Millicent watched him and Kate who followed; and she thought she heard Kate say in an under tone; "That is the Millicent he talks so much about in his delirium."

And Doctor Millet replied; "*Ah, la pauvre mademoiselle!*" he turned and looked compassionately at her, then he went into the next

room, and Katie came back to Millicent; she sat down by her side, and putting her arm round her, said, affectionately:

"I am sorry, dear Millicent, that poor Fortescue is so ill."

"Oh, Kate, is he very ill, must he die?" exclaimed Millicent.

"So long as there is life, there is hope," she replied, but there was not much hope in her tone, for Kate dared not hold out false encouragement, and the tears rolled down Millicent's cheeks as she said in a whisper; "Katie, has his illness anything to do with madness?"

"No dear, but it was the fear of it, that brought on this fever, and, poor fellow! there was no occasion to dread it, for the report that his father died insane, was entirely groundless."

"Does he know this," asked Millicent.

"No Millicent, I wish he could—strangely, or rather I ought to say, providentially, the physician who was sent for, on his being taken ill, is the very medical man, who not

only attended his father, but was intimately acquainted with him, and has given us all the particulars of his death."

"And what were they?" asked Millicent, with intense interest.

"I suppose you have often heard of the life of dissipation poor Mr. Heyward led, and his love of gambling. At the time of his last residence in Paris, Doctor Millet, who was attached to a regiment, became acquainted with him, and, I believe, frequently lost large sums with him at the gaming-tables. One night, after they had been indulging in their favourite propensity, he returned with Mr. Heyward to his rooms, and shortly after they arrived, his companion was taken with a sudden attack of illness, caused by his intemperate habits; and he says, the struggles and convulsions in which he expired, together with his wild ravings, possessed every one with the firm belief, and caused the report, of his being insane. But Doctor Millet says the supposi-

tion was an absurd one, for he had known him some time, and he had never shown the slightest symptom of a diseased mind. His sudden death, too, was by some attributed to suicide, which was equally false. Doctor Millet tells me, several men in his regiment, who were addicted to drinking, as poor Mr. Heyward was, died in exactly the same manmer. But the most unfortunate part of the affair was, that on the morning following the death of his friend, Doctor Millet was obliged to leave Paris with his regiment, which was ordered to Algeria; and. therefore, he was unable to contradict the report, or deliver his friend's papers into the hands of any of his relatives; and, not wishing to leave them in the care of the people who kept the house where he died, or give them to Mr. Heyward's servant, who was most dishonest, he took them away with him; and, to this day, they remain sealed up, just as they were left by their unfortunate owner, and if poor Fortescue

recovers, they will be delivered into his hands."

Millicent's countenance was very pale and sad, as she heard this, and thought how there had been no occasion for their separation; had not Mrs. Robertson sent her away from Staplehurst so abruptly, they might have had the benefit of Mr. Seymour's advice, and then she thought, perhaps she might have been with him now, and he in health; but she tried to dispel this idea, and asked Kate why he came to Paris, and she received an account of his health gradually declining at Horton, and that they thought the change would benefit him. And then Kate learnt from Millicent the manner in which she heard of their arrival.

At last, Millicent said, "What a long time the doctor is! Can Lord Fortescue be worse?"

"Oh, no, Millicent—they would have sent for me, if he were. Dr. Millet always remains

some time with him; he is so very kind to poor Fortescue, and several nights he has sat up with him, but we all take it by turns, though my husband is seldom away from his bed-side."

"That reminds me, Katie," exclaimed Millicent, "that amidst all this sorrow, I have never told you how surprised and happy I am you are married, and to Mr. Seymour! I used formerly to wonder at your quiet resolve to spend a lonely life; I was convinced you were attached to some one, but, strangely enough, I never guessed it was Mr. Seymour —it is all explained now."

"Yes, Millicent," said Kate; but she spoke in a tone as if she were not attending, and her eyes were fixed anxiously on the door, which was just then opened by Mr. Seymour. Millicent thought he looked very sad, as he came forward, without noticing her; but he stopped almost immediately, saying, "Can it possibly be Miss Thornville?"

"Yes, Everard," replied Kate; "Millicent is staying in Paris, and hearing accidentally of poor Fortescue's illness, and our being here, she has come to see us."

Mr. Seymour shook hands with Millicent, and looked at her very kindly and compassionately, as he said, "I am glad to meet you again, and so, I am sure, is Katie."

"Kate's only answer was, to put her arm tighter round Millicent, as she asked her husband anxiously: "What does Doctor Millet say?"

Mr. Seymour shook his head, as he replied softly, "We can do nothing but pray for him."

"Then Monsieur Millet thinks him worse?" exclaimed Kate.

"He scarcely appears to know what to think?" said Mr. Seymour.

"But there must be a crisis soon," said Kate; "I am sure, when dear Mary was ill, there was just as little reason to hope."

"If you are rested, perhaps you will go to him, Katie?" he answered, quietly; "he seems almost easier when you are in the room; I think if any one can benefit him, it will be you, your hands move so gently about his pillow."

Kate looked from her husband to Millicent—Mr. Seymour seemed to understand that glance, for he said, as if in reply, "I will remain with Miss Thornville, my dear."

How strange it was to Millicent to hear Mr. Seymour call Kate 'dear;' she could scarcely realize that they were indeed married, and that she was with them in a foreign land; but there could be no joy in that meeting—Lord Fortescue was actually dying in an adjoining room! that thought was agony, and yet it was but too true; she read in Mr. Seymour's countenance that there was no hope! Kate rose, and, kissing Millicent fondly, told her to lay aside her bonnet and mantle, and endeavour to be as composed as possible, and she

would come in and tell her if Lord Fortescue gave the least sign of improvement, and then Katie left her and went back into the sufferer's sick chamber; she stepped very softly across the darkened room, for he could not bear the least noise, and, going to his bedside, she gazed sadly at his face. Monsieur Millet was also there—he had just been placing ice on his forehead, and for some time poor Arthur seemed to feel relief, but after awhile he again started up, and began in painful cries: "Oh, will not any one cool my forehead?—will no one help me? ah, no, I am quite forsaken! 'Kate might have come for me—she cared for Mary, but she does not think of me!—and Everard, too, who always loved me, and was such a friend, yet now he has forsaken me, and is happy with his bride at Staplehurst, little thinking that his poor cousin is dying of the heat in a desert land, among strange people!"

Kate bent over him, and spoke soothingly, but he only called, as he always did at his

worst moments, for Millicent, in piercing, harrowing tones, which she, poor girl, heard in the sitting-room; her face was deadly pale, and her whole frame trembled. Mr. Seymour had been talking to her all the time, but now they both ceased, and at that moment Monsieur Millet entered the room; he looked perplexed and troubled, and murmured "very bad, very bad!" He looked at Millicent for a minute, hesitatingly, and then asked her, if she would object to come to Lord Fortescue, only she must be calm and composed; he told her how constantly he called for her, and said, that perhaps her presence might have a good effect on him, he could not tell, but nothing ought to be left untried. And Millicent consented to accompany him, longing, yet dreading to see again that loved one, whom she might be only beholding once more, to part from for ever in death. It was a moment of indescribable agony, as she followed the doctor through the next room; Arthur's door was

open, and she saw before she entered it, the darkened chamber, but it was not till she approached the bed-side, that she gazed on the face she so much loved, and oh, how altered! Could that wasted, fevered countenance, which appeared almost consumed beneath the crimson heat that coloured the cheeks, be the same which she remembered but a few months ago? and the bright, glossy hair, which Katie had always told Millicent was the colour of her own, had all been cut closely off, and in its place damp cloths were laid, adding yet more to his unnatural appearance, and those soft eyes, that had turned so fondly, so hopefully upon her, when last they had met, were bright, fearfully brilliant, as they roved wildly. Katie was by his side, fanning him with a large green fan, and Millicent went up to her, and stood behind her; she felt almost powerless, and knew the blood was leaving her face, she thought her lips must even be colourless, but it was surprising she had any strength remaining, so

great had been the shock occasioned by Arthur's altered appearance.

Monsieur Millet was standing on the other side of the bed and he motioned to Millicent to come round to him. She obeyed, scarcely knowing what she did, and he placed her where Lord Fortescue might see her, and then sat down behind the curtain himself; but Arthur did not notice her, his eyes were turned upwards, and for some minutes he lay quite still. Kate continued fanning till she looked quite exhausted by the exertion; presently, he again began talking wildly—"Oh, Millicent wants wild flowers!" he exclaimed, "but I can find none—not even roses; and there used to be so many on the Westworth hills! If I bring her flowers she will come to me! Oh, Millicent, Millicent! shall I never see you again!"

"Speak to him," whispered Monsieur Millet, to the trembling girl; "speak to him!" Millicent thought her voice would have for-

saken her at that moment, but Katie also signed to her to speak; her heart beat nearly to suffocation, but she managed to say "Lord Fortescue!" though so softly, that he did not hear her. "Speak louder!" said the doctor; and Kate whispered "Call him Arthur." That moment was almost more than Millicent could bear, as she again addressed him—"Arthur, Millicent is here—" She could not proceed, but those few words were enough.

"Who spoke?" he exclaimed, starting up and fixing on her a glance, full of enquiry; "who called me Arthur? Mother, oh mother! is it you speaking again to your boy?—they told me you were dead, but I said you would return to me—that you only slept—the sunbeams shone on your face as you lay back in your chair, and I watched by your side—but they took you away from me, mother, and I grew up in solitude—but you are here again now, and your voice is music to me—it is like the songs of angels—oh, God! I thank thee!"

He grasped Millicent's hand in those burning fingers, that seemed like fire to hers, and he lay back again on his pillow; a smile was on his lips, and his eyes no longer roved wildly, but were fixed on her pale watchful face.

"Don't undeceive him," whispered the doctor; and, when he again addressed her, and begged his sweet mother not to leave him, she replied, that she would stay; and then he lay quite still, and talked fast, but in a quiet voice, about home and their pleasant walks—and he seemed to fancy he was showing her the new church, and he said—"I built it for you, dear mother—and we will pray there together, and return thanks for your return—we shall never part again, till God calls us both to Heaven—and I shall not be afraid to go, when you are with me—we can help each other over the dark river to the celestial city, and then the toil will be o'er — and those bright angels, who hover round us now, we shall meet there again, and they will be our

companions! Oh, mother, only think what is the society that they wish to entice me into now, to that!"—He ceased, and his eyes closed; Millicent turned and looked with an inquiring glance at the doctor, as she thought there was now no hope; when she looked again at Arthur, the bright colour was fading from his face, and a death-like appearance pervaded it; the hand, too, which she held in hers, grew cooler—and an agony of fear seized her, that he was dying; but the doctor moved noiselessly round, and taking the other hand, which lay outside the bed, placed his fingers on his wrist—and motionless they all remained. Arthur's hand still clasped Millicent's firmly, and he became perfectly still, and, she thought, breathless; but Kate continued to fan him—her large, dark eyes were fixed on his face, and Monsieur Millet remained quietly standing; and Millicent—oh, the hundred thoughts that rushed through her mind!—she thought of the last time she had

seen him, and he had walked by her side, forming plans for their happiness on that September eve—and then, of their first meeting, of their songs, and his sweet winning manner; and she thought of the fire, and how sad his illness had made her then—and those summer rambles, when they had been such a merry, joyous party, and he had always singled her out as his companion—and she remembered how handsome he looked, with the colour of health on his cheek—oh, the contrast now was painful in the extreme!—And Millicent called to mind other changes, too—Katie married to him she so much loved, and possessing happiness that had been unhoped; while Millicent felt hers was fast fading away—she could not doubt it, and she already fancied him received into the Heaven he had loved to converse of; she had always imagined him too good for earth, and she remembered how fitted he was to enter into rest, and almost blamed her selfishness for wishing to detain him here;

but, if Arthur went, she must follow him—there would be no attractions for her then, nothing to bind her to earth—fatherless and motherless, she was indeed an orphan—oh, she should be happy with Arthur and the angels! But, while she thought, and gazed on his loved face, the expression of pain wore away, his head rested easily on his pillow, his breathing became more regular—and he slept!

His hand still held hers; she could have dropped to the ground with fatigue, but she gave not one thought to herself; neither did Katie, who still continued fanning, that he might have more air on that oppressive July day; and the doctor sat motionless, longing more ardently than he had ever done in his life that his patient might recover—he felt he loved the youth, but his hopes hung on a fibre, and he, too, thought with Millicent that he was too good for this earth.

And so they remained, a fit group for a

painter—the young nobleman, in his death-like slumber, his sweet features looking placid as some sleeping child—the gentle creature whose hand he held, and whose every breath seemed suspended, lest it should disturb that calm repose—the fine countenance of Kate watching the sufferer almost as a mother would watch her child—and then, the anxious face of Monsieur Millet, whose marked outlines were all expressive of the one thought that occupied them all—that sleep of life or death!

And so the time passed by, and Arthur still slept. Millicent recalled all she had heard of him as a child, and visions of her own early days flitted before her, too; and she thought how strangely they had met as infants, and when they knew not each other—and now they knew and loved, they must part! But while this agonised reflection occupied her mind, Arthur moved, and left her hand; she dropped back into a chair behind the cur-

tain—she could stand no longer—but she heard his voice, though the whisper was faint—"Katie," he said, "am I ill?—where have I been all this time?"

"You are in Paris, dear Arthur—but you must not talk." And Katie gave him a cordial, Doctor Millet handed her; and then Arthur spoke again—"Do not fan any more, sit down, thank you, Kate," and he laid his thin wasted hand on hers.

For some minutes Millicent sat in silence, she could scarcely think or breathe; but presently Doctor Millet came round and beckoned her away. She took one glance—he was again quietly sleeping; the doctor whispered in her ear, "He is safe!" She cast another look of happiness on that now pale face, and then followed Monsieur Millet into the sitting-room. Mr. Seymour was there, and immediately came forward to meet them; the doctor again repeated the words, "He is safe!" But Millicent did not hear them—

Mr. Seymour was just in time to prevent her falling, for she had fainted from the overpowering emotions of that dreadful day.

CHAPTER X.

'——————Can such things be,
And overcome us like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder?'

SHAKSPEARE.

KATE had long suspected that Lord Fortescue had been attached to Millicent, and his repeated mention of her name in the unconsciousness of delirium, confirmed her in the belief, though it was not till the evening of that eventful day, after Millicent had recovered from her fainting, that she heard the whole history of their engagement.

Kate sighed, as she thought how much they

both must have suffered; and so young, Millicent not twenty, and he only two years her senior, and yet on them both, a more than common weight of sorrow had fallen and it was not ended; for though the fever had left the poor sufferer, still Monsieur Millet had many fears that he might sink under the weakness it left.

There was no one better able to sympathise with Millicent than Katie, for she too had known sorrow, and well and affectionately she soothed the sorrowing girl, and led her to look up to where alone cometh our help; it seemed strange to Millicent to be reminded of her faith and hope, when but a few months had passed since she had dirrected Katie to look to the heavenly road.

Oh, how Millicent rejoiced in the midst of her grief, to see her beloved Kate was enlisted among the soldiers of the cross, and to know that the friend around whom her affections so ardently clung, loved the same Lord, the same

faith, and would be her companion for eternity as well as for the time!

And so Katie Seymour comforted her Millicent and bade her hope, for the anchor was truly Kate's device, and hope her motto, and this cheered her as she watched beside Arthur's pillow and prayed that the child of so many prayers, him on whom so much happiness depended, might be spared.

Katie proved as good a nurse with Arthur, as she had been with Mary; gentle, thoughtful, and kind, was the beautiful girl in every action to her loved husband's cousin, and Monsieur Millet praised her, and Everard looked fondly at his wife, and thanked the giver of all for having sent her to him.

Katie would have kept Millicent with her at the hotel; but both Mr. Seymour and herself thought it more advisable that she should return to her kind friends. Doctor Millet said—"In his patient's present weak state, he must not see Millicent; and that unless he

spoke of her, she must not even be mentioned before him, till he was strong enough to hear all the circumstances attending his father's death."

So, that night, Mr. Seymour took Millicent back to Mr. Meredith, who was not only uneasy, but quite alarmed at her lengthened absence. And not a little surprised were her kind-hearted friends, after Mr. Seymour had left her with as much explanation as he thought advisable, at the tale of sorrow she timidly poured forth.

Mrs. Meredith had been grieved at hearing from Mr. Seymour the account of Lord Fortescue's illness; but when she learnt how the orphan girl, whom they already loved, stood towards the only son of her revered friend, Mrs. Heyward, her interest and affection increased for her tenfold.

It was Mrs. Meredith's first care, the following morning, to go to the Hotel du Rhin, and make inquiries after Lord Fortescue, and there

she saw Kate Seymour. Millicent, who accompanied Mrs. Meredith, introduced them. Katie was very polite to Lord Fortescue's friend, and Mrs. Meredith was charmed with her; but Millicent declared she was not seen to the best advantage, as those beautiful dark eyes she so much admired, were heavy for want of sleep; for Katie had been up all night with Arthur.

She told them he was just the same as on the preceding evening, but she had every hope from his sleeping, though Doctor Millet said he was "only just alive," so weak did he consider him; and so he continued, for hours he scarcely spoke, and then his voice was not raised above a whisper.

If care, if love, could have hastened his recovery, he had both these; for not only were the Seymours devoted to him, but John's every care was for his master. He never thought of fatigue, he did not seem to require sleep, but, ever watchful, he bent over his young lord's

couch, and longed with every pulse, every heart's throb, that he might be restored. John talked very little to any one—not even to Mr. Seymour—of what he felt; but there was something peculiarly touching in the young man's devotion to one he had so recently rescued from death.

Day succeeded day, and Arthur still continued in the same feeble state. Millicent spent hours at the hotel, frequently alone; but oftentimes Kate came and sat with her, and said how she rejoiced he was not worse. But Millicent could not joy—she only sorrowed at his prolonged illness: it seemed to blight every ray of hope in which she had indulged; and when she returned to the Merediths, it was to pray and weep.

A fortnight passed since the change in Lord Fortescue's illness without any improvement; and Kate's expectations that he would recover strength began to grow less sanguine. She had been writing home, and Mr. Seymour had

taken the letter to post it; and Katie again watched by Arthur. The weather still continued very warm, and she drew a chair to the window, and took up a book. But she could not read—her thoughts wandered back to days gone by, when first she could recollect Mr. Seymour.

As she was thus musing, she heard Arthur call her. In an instant she was at his bedside.

"Katie," he said, rather sadly, "what a trouble I am to you!"

"Indeed you are not," she replied, cheerfully. "I thought you were asleep, or I should have come to you before."

"Oh, no; I was not asleep; I have been watching you. Katie, what day of the month is it?"

"The twentieth of July, Arthur; and to day is Wednesday."

"How long is it since I left Horton? What has happened all the time?

"You have been very ill, but now you will soon get well again," Kate replied.

"Do you think so?" he asked, despondingly,

"Yes," said Kate, "you are very weak, but you will gain strength."

"I do not feel as if I cared whether I recover or no, for I do not think I shall ever be happy again."

"Yes, you will," she replied, "you must not talk despairingly, but believe that the God who has taken care of you thus far, is not raising you up from your sick bed, that you may be unhappy."

"You spoke so like Everard then," he said, and Arthur smiled for the first time since his illness.

"That is a great compliment to me," Kate replied, "for Everard's voice is so sweet."

Lord Fortescue closed his eyes, as if the effort of speaking had been too much for him. Katie went and brought him some refreshment, and after he had taken it, he appeared

considerably revived, and his voice seemed stronger as he asked anxiously:—

"Katie, did I not talk about a great many strange things in my delirium?"

"No, nothing, Arthur, that we did not know before; you seemed to be thinking a great deal about home."

"But did I never mention people?" he asked.

"Oh yes," she replied, "you spoke of several persons."

Again he was silent for a few minutes, and then he exclaimed in a very distressed tone—"I know I shall never recover, it is impossible, for I have something on my mind that haunts and tortures me so much, that it is enough without anything else to injure my health."

"But dear Fortescue, it is not right to give way to such fears, for there is no occasion."

"Then you know," he began.

"Yes, Everard told me," she replied.

"And do you not pity me, Kate?" he asked.

"I did, Fortescue, but Doctor Millet says that you must learn to forget these fancies."

"The doctor! does he know?" said Lord Fortescue, anxiously, "and what does he think?"

"That your fears were quite groundless; Doctor Millet has reason for knowing this."

"In what way?" asked Arthur, almost impatiently.

Kate hesitated a moment, she almost feared she had gone too far, and yet now, after what Lord Fortescue had said, and having himself introduced the subject., she felt persuaded, that even though it might agitate him to listen, he ought not to be allowed to remain in the belief that his father was insane.

"You know, dear Fortescue," she said, very quietly. "that it was in Paris your father died; and since we have been here, we have learned from Monsieur Millet, who attended him in his last illness, all the particulars of his death." And Katie detailed, as

briefly and calmly as possible, the account which the physician had given them.

"Then those men told false!" he exclaimed, the colour rushing to his pale cheeks; "would I had never heard them—I should have been spared all the misery I have suffered—and she—oh, what have I done?"

"Fortescue, you must not agitate yourself so much," said Kate.

"But I cannot help it; I will tell you all. You loved her like a sister—and to me, Katie, you have been a sister, indeed!—ever since we met, there has not been a day when you you were not kind to me! Katie, Millicent was engaged to me—we were to have been married—but when I heard that horrid report, I wrote to her, and dissolved our engagement, and I have lost the fairest flower that ever bloomed!"

"Dear Arthur," replied Kate, "you must not be so desponding—you have not lost her. I have frequently heard from Millicent, and

have reason to know she is still true to you. I will prescribe for you now," she continued cheerfully; "you must be as quiet and composed as possible, and make haste and get well; and then, I will see if we cannot manage to bring Millicent here, and let her say for herself, if she has forgotten you or no."

"Oh, Katie, you are too kind!" he said, taking her hand, and pressing it to his lips; "you have been a good angel to us both!" He looked as though he would burst into tears, but Kate answered, smiling—

"I do not think I resemble an angel, they are always represented with flowing golden locks—I fear I am anything but seraphic—but I am not going to let you talk any more; I shall not speak again for a long time, and you must try and take some rest, that Monsieur. Millet may not say when he comes that I am a bad nurse, and have been agitating you."

She drew the curtains to shut out the light,

and returned to the window, and thought over their conversation; she had not dared to tell him Millicent was actually in Paris, and the physician, when she related all that had passed, praised her for having acted so judiciously, and after that day, though Arthur had at first appeared rather thrown back, yet he slowly but certainly recovered; he had now no dread of insanity to haunt his waking moments; and Katie had, by promising to send for Millicent when he was strong enough, relieved his mind greatly about her; and in another fortnight from that Wednesday he was able to get up for a few hours.

He then heard from Doctor Millet's own lips the account of his father's death, and received the packet of papers; they were perfectly unimportant, except one that mentioned Mr. Heyward's marriage with Millicent Leslie, the adopted daughter of a Mr. Lewyn, a clergyman in Carnarvonshire. Lord Fortescue determined, when he returned to England, he

would endeavour to find out Mr. Lewyn, and if he were alive he should at length learn his mother's history.

He lay on his sofa, in the pleasant sitting-room where Kate was working, thinking about this, when he heard voices in the passage, and then in the room adjoining; he listened a moment attentively, and then, starting up, he exclaimed—

"Katie, I am sure that is Eager's voice—I know it well!"

Kate went to see, and, after a short interval, she returned.

"You were right, Fortescue, Eager has come—poor old man, he seems to think it an immense journey, but though he never crossed the channel before, he longed so intensely to see you again, that he was obliged to make the effort; he seems very mysterious, and anxious to have a *tête-à-tête* with you—will you admit him? I fear his visit will excite you."

Arthur promised to be calm, little imagining

what the old man's visit would bring forth; and Katie ushered the attorney in. At first, Eager seemed able to think of nothing but Lord Fortescue's altered looks, and to bewail his illness, but after a while, he drew his chair very close to Arthur's sofa, and said in a low voice that he had brought him some news that would surprise him very much.

Of course Lord Fortescue was very anxious to hear what Eager had to tell him, feeling quite full of wonder as to what it could be. And then the old man related a history as curious as it was interesting.

He began by the account of his finding the certificate of Mr. Heyward's marriage, and how Arthur had himself saved it in the fire, in the very pocket-book, in rescuing which he nearly lost his life; he then went on to narrate how he had been prevented by the lengthened law business, from journeying into Wales, but that on Lord Fortescue's return to Horton, after the unfortunate party at Mrs. Meredith's, he had

visited Tredellyn; he described the interest he had felt in entering the village, and the hopes he entertained of discovering Mrs. Heyward's relations.

The first person he met, he asked after Mr. Lewyn, and was told that, he was formerly vicar of the parish, but that he had died the preceding year.

Eager then enquired for his relations, but found his children were dispersed, and the only one then in England, was a daughter who resided in Windsor, where she had married many years ago.

Nothing daunted by his want of success, Eager determined to seek Mrs. Bryant in Windsor, but before he left, he made many enquiries among the villagers about Miss Leslie, who was remembered by many, but only as Mr. Lewyn's daughter; where she had been before he brought her home from "foreign parts," they were ignorant.

The last thing Eager did was to visit the

church, and there he saw in the parish register, his late master's signature, side by side that of his Welsh bride.

Full of hope, he left Wales, and the next evening he found himself in London; the day following, he was in Windsor, where to his dismay, Mrs. Bryant was not to be found; she had not lived in the town, but in a small village near, and there the enterprising attorney went, but another disappointment awaited him, Mrs. Bryant had let her house, and gone abroad for an indefinite period; here then was a final blow to his high-raised hopes, and he returned to the Chase disappointed and quite cast down.

Months passed by, and it was not till Lord Fortescue's visit to Paris, that Eager bethought himself of another attempt to discover Mrs. Bryant. It was a beautiful June morning, that he started from Windsor, to walk to S——; and when he arrived at the cottage, he saw an elderly lady in the garden; he

enquired of her, if Mrs. Bryant had returned, and to his joy, he found that he was addressing the very person he was seeking.

Eager said she was very kind, especially when she learnt the cause of his visit, and asked every particular about Lord Fortescue, and seemed deeply interested in hearing of Mrs. Heyward's death; and in answer to Eager's questions about his mistress's birth and parentage, Mrs. Bryant told him she knew ltitle about Miss Leslie's history, except that her father, a young man of property, in travelling on the Continent, fell in love with, and married a young lady residing in a school near Stutgard; she was an English girl, and an orphan, and no one ever heard any more about her. It appears Mr. Leslie never informed his father, who was then alive, of this marriage, but took a house some miles from Stutgard, and lived in retirement for several years; they had one child, a little girl, and when she was about two years old, her mother

died quite suddenly, and almost immediately after her death, he placed the little Millicent in the care of the ladies at whose school her mother had resided, with a handsome sum of money to defray her expenses for six months, promising at the expiration of that time to visit her, but the months passed, and the father did not return, another six, and still no tidings of him.

Just at that time Mr. Lewyn and Mrs. Bryant, then quite a girl, arrived at Stutgard, and went to this very school, where Mr. Lewyn had purposed leaving his daughter to finish her education. However, he found the ladies just about to break up their establishment and retire, but in great uncertainty what to do with the little deserted Millicent. They felt convinced, from what Mr. Leslie had said, that his friends in England were unacquainted with his marriage, and that he never intended to return and claim his child; and the sisters proposed sending her to an orphan-school.

Mrs. Bryant said her father's heart was quite drawn towards the little girl, who she described as an engaging, fair little creature; and, after a short consideration, he determined to adopt her as his own; and he arranged that, should the ladies hear from Mr. Leslie, they were to refer him to Mr. Lewyn.

And so the clergyman and his daughter returned to Wales with the little Millicent, who soon grew a sweet and lovely child, and twined herself around his heart.

And thus ten years passed away, and nothing was heard of Mr. Leslie, till one day, in the obituary of the *Times*, Mr. Lewyn saw the death of a person of that name, answering to the age ascribed to him by the ladies at Stutgard.

Though there are a great many families bear the name of Leslie, still, Mrs. Bryant said her father wished to leave nothing untried to discover the parent of his darling adopted child; not that he wished to part from her, but for her sake and

interest hereafter. Accordingly, he set off for London, where Mr. Leslie died; and, on inquiry, found him to have been, indeed, Millicent's father; he having resided several years in Germany; after which he returned to England, and married a Miss Thornville—the fact of his previous marriage being unknown. Indeed Mr. Lewyn was considered an impostor, and his story regarded merely as a pretext to put in a claim for a share of the large property Mr. Leslie had left to his wife and eldest daughter, all his other children having died.

Mr. Lewyn having no money to defray lawyer's expenses, was obliged to let the matter rest, though Mrs. Bryant told Eager she had never known her father so indignant as at the injustice done to the poor orphan, which he always carefully concealed from her, thinking it would only be distressing to herself to know herself an outcast, and deprived of the fortune which she ought to have inherited.

So Millicent Leslie lived on with Mr.

Lewyn till her marriage with Frank Heyward. It appeared neither Mr. Lewyn nor Mrs. Bryant had ever liked him; but Millicent over-ruled their objections, and went from the humble, but happy Welsh vicarage to the luxury and misery of the Chase.

Mrs. Bryant said her father had twice visited her, but had been denied to see his adopted child; and that Mr. Heyward had forbidden his wife even to write to Mr. Lewyn; but to this she had never agreed, though she had so far obeyed her tyrannical husband, as never to mention him to her son.

Mrs. Bryant told Eager, in conclusion, that Mrs. Leslie's daughter had married a Mr. Thornville, of Heatherton Manor, her first cousin, but not till after her mother's death, and the whole of her father's West Indian property had become involved, and was obliged to be sold to pay the creditors; and, strange to say, Mrs. Bryant continued, she had heard Mrs. Thornville's only child had also become

an orphan, and been disinherited of her splendid mansion.

"And so, my lord," said Eager, "the pretty Miss Thornville, who was at Staplehurst, is your cousin!"—but while he was thus speaking, the colour faded from Lord Fortescue's cheek, and his hand clasped the side of the sofa.

"Oh, what have I done?" exclaimed the old man, in a voice of agony;—"My lord, how could I forget your weak state, and talk on all this time?"—and Eager hastened, quite terrified, into the next room for Kate; but neither she nor Mr. Seymour were there; John was waiting with trembling anxiety for Eager's low murmurings to cease; and when he followed the attorney into the sitting-room, his master was lying back, quite overcome by Eager's extraordinary narrative.

CHAPTER XI.

'I did not think to live such an hour
Of joy as this ! and often overcome
With heavy anguish—I have prayed
That God would please to take me to his rest.'

SOUTHEY.

THERE was great joy and thankfulness in the heart of the gentle Millicent, as Lord Fortescue's health improved; it had been a sad season for her during his illness, though Mrs. Meredith and Emily had done every thing that affection could devise, to amuse her; and Millicent tried to enter into their kind plans for her amusement, and really was grateful.

Yet, when she was not at the hotel (where she could not often remain, feeling timid and fearful of being in the way), the quiet of her own room was to her the happiest place, for there she could pray, undisturbed, for Arthur and herself, and endeavour to compose her thoughts, and fix them more on Heaven. She loved the solitude of that chamber, where she had implored help, and now she could return praises and thanksgivings, with a heart overflowing with a sense of God's love to her and those dear to her; and in her little room, Katie found Millicent, when she came in, a few afternoons after Eager's arrival.

"Oh, Kate!" she exclained—"I would not go out with the Merediths, for I thought you would call."

"I came at Fortescue's especial request," said Katie—and there was something peculiarly joyous in her expression, as she spoke.

"How is he?" asked Millicent.

"Much better," she replied; "he relapsed

a little, after Eager came, but he is charming to-day—so sweetly happy, it is quite delightful to talk to him; but, Millicent dear, he wants to see you, to make his happiness complete. I told him you were here, and explained every thing, and he is now anxiously expecting you.—Will you come?"

"Oh, yes, Katie!" said Millicent—and she came close to her, and, taking her hand, rested her soft, sweet face on her friend's shoulder, as she added—

"Katie, how I love you!"

"I am sure the affection is quite reciprocal," replied Kate—and she kissed her several times; "but now, suppose we go—I do not like to keep poor Fortescue in suspense, and I know, dear, how you must desire to see him."

Millicent was scarcely a minute hurrying on her bonnet; she felt a strange sensation come over her as she thought of that night when she had last seen him, sleeping, as she ima-

gined, a sleep that would only awake in eternity; and she was very silent during her walk with Katie, trying to compose herself before entering the hotel.

When they reached the Seymour's rooms, Kate did not go to prepare Lord Fortescue for Millicent's visit, but she opened the door of his sitting-room, and there Millicent saw, on a sofa by the window, him she loved so well.

Katie scarcely gave Millicent time to think, for she said, cheerfully—

"You are constantly telling me, Fortescue, that I bring you good things, and now I have brought you that which surpasses them all—you see I have fulfilled my promise—here is Millicent!"

Lord Fortescue raised himself up, and the warm colour rushed to his pale cheeks; Millicent advanced to his sofa—she felt her hand tremble as he took it in his, and she said in a very low tone, "I am glad you are better, Lord Fortescue;" though, as she spoke, her

heart was grieved at his thin, wasted appearance; his cheeks looked hollow, and the soft, hazel eyes, bright and large—and in the place of his rich brown hair was a little velvet cap, so that he scarcely wore the appearance of the Lord Fortescue she had parted with at Staplehurst nearly a year before, as her affianced husband.

But, though he was so altered, his face had a contented and happy expression, and he replied—

"Oh, yes, I am much better, thanks to Katie's kindness, and I hope to be soon quite well again."

"And emancipated from my *surveillance*," said Kate; "do not rise, Fortescue, I will do the honours of your room;" and she placed a chair for Millicent near his sofa; Katie did not sit down herself, but stood talking for a few minutes about common-place subjects, till she had made them a little at their ease, and then she said—

"I am going to finish some letters to Staplehurst—have you any message?"

Lord Fortescue did not appear to be able to recollect any at that moment, and Katie left them once more—alone.

How the thoughts of each were carried rapidly back to their walk at Staplehurst, and Lord Fortescue, who was the first to speak, alluded to it.

"We little thought, when last we parted," he said, "how many long and sad months would intervene before we met again; but all has been wisely ordered, and, from my illness and our separation, things have become known in such a wonderful manner, dear Millicent, that I can scarcely realise them. Katie has told you one circumstance, that in itself is enough for all our praise—you have heard respecting my father?"

"Yes," replied Millicent, quietly; and, as she raised her sweet face, and looked calmly towards him, she continued, "I always thought

it was not quite placing trust in Providence, to heed those reports and apply them to yourself."

"Then you did not believe I should ever inherit that supposed malady?" he asked, earnestly.

"No, Lord Fortescue," she replied; "there was not the least reason for such a supposition."

"Did you not think me very cold—very heartless, in sending you that letter?—Oh, Millicent, I cannot endure to think how I must have pained you!"

"It did make me very unhappy," replied Millicent, fixing her eyes on the ground; "but I saw nothing cold or heartless in the letter. I only knew your motives, and they were quite honourable."

She spoke so low, he could scarcely hear her; but he said, warmly—

"Millicent, have you changed towards me since that walk? Can you care for me still,

now that the barrier that separated us is removed?—can you forget that our engagement was dissolved? I broke it myself—oh, Millicent, you never can know the agony it cost me! But now it rests with you to say, if my plans of happiness shall be carried out, or if I am to pass a life of solitude!"—and he trembled with agitation as he spoke.

Millicent felt sorry to see his distress, and, when he ceased speaking, she said, softly—

"I had rather, Lord Fortescue, we stood just as we did when we separated;" and then, she added, raising her eyes timidly, "had we not better forget all that has intervened, and be happy for the present, and hopeful for the future?"

His eyes filled with tears, as he replied—

"Such happiness is overpowering—it is more than I deserve. When I think over all my doubts and repinings, it seems that some punishment ought to have been my doom, and, instead, I am crowned with blessings!

I hear people talk frequently of the 'trail of the serpent,' but the wing of an angel has passed gently over my path."

"And I am sure it has passed over mine," said Millicent. "When I lost my parents, there was given me, in dear Kate, such a friend as I never thought to meet; and when I was separated from her, and from you," she added, in a low voice, "then I had the Merediths; so I have never been without a touch of the angel's wing; and now it seems resting on me, for I have found all my former happiness again."

"And I have found more than that, Millicent," he exclaimed. "You know the wonderful likeness to my beloved mother which first attracted me to you: it appeared mysterious then, but now it is accounted for. My mother and yours were sisters; and, dear Millicent," he added, "we are cousins, though we met for months as almost strangers."

Millicent could not understand what he

meant, and Lord Fortescue was obliged to give an account of Eager's story before she could realise this new relationship. And then she said—

"Does Katie know this?"

"Yes—and she has wondered as much as I did; and, dear Millicent, you will now have her for a cousin; she will be no longer only a friend, but a relation. Dear Kate, half our happiness comes through her; and God has shown His love in sending her and Everard to us. Oh, Millicent, we are highly favoured in having such friends."

"But, our being related is so wonderful, I can scarcely understand it even now," said Millicent, whose mind was quite occupied by this discovery.

"Yes, we are cousins now," he replied; "but in a few months we shall be related by a nearer tie. How delighted my tenantry will be to have a second Millicent—another sweet Millicent—to interest herself in them! Oh,

dearest," he said, "I never thought to realise this happy hour, when I spent my last lonely days at the Chase, melancholy and sad, longing for you, and yet daily haunted with that terrible thought! But this shall be buried with the past you bade me forget."

"Do not revert to it," said Millicent; "I cannot bear to think of what you have suffered."

"My home will be doubly dear, when I return," he replied; "we never appreciate or value God's gifts till they appear fading from us, but the most precious gift I have yet received, is my Millicent—may I value and treasure her as she deserves."

And as he held Millicent's hand in his, a tear fell on it, not of sorrow, but of joy.

Thus they remained talking together for some time till Katie returned.

How they both loved Kate Seymour! she was like the good genii in a fairy tale putting everything straight and happy.

When Katie took Millicent home that evening, there was not a lighter or more perfectly happy heart in Paris than hers, she felt her trials were now ended, and when she wished Kate good-night, her bright looks and whispered words of love, were more than a reward for that noble girl's persevering affection for the orphan governess.

Millicent was constantly at the hotel now; she played and read to Lord Fortescue, and when he took the first walk after his long and tedious illness, his affianced bride was his companion.

Doctor Millet did not wish Lord Fortescue to return to England, till he had quite regained his strength, and proposed their removal to Boulogne; everyone approved of this plan, and they were a large party when they left Paris for the sea.

Mrs. Meredith had engaged a pleasant suite of apartments at one of the hotels, where Lord Fortescue became her guest, and Mr. Seymour,

after having seen his wife and Millicent comfortably settled in a house near, left them to return to his parish, promising at Kate's request, to send over little Mary and her nurse, for Kate had much felt the long separation from her.

Tom who had managed at last to gain Mary's affection brought them over; he said he was playing the part of a model uncle, and seemed very glad to see Katie, and all the party again.

"Well, my lord," said Tom, on the evening of his arrival, as they and Katie, happened to be alone; "I must congratulate you—which I do with all my heart, on having chosen the prettiest bride in all England—and yet, to tell you the truth, I ought to be jealous, for I myself once had an eye to the fair lady."

"Pray do not expose your folly, Tom," said Kate, laughing.

"You may laugh, but you know it is quite true—I offered to her at Heatherton, and, to

my great dismay, was refused—little guessing how things stood; and so now we are all to be cousins to each other.—It is, indeed, quite surprising; I can scarcely understand the relationship—let me see, Kate is to be cousin to me, and I am to be cousin to Lord Fortescue.—Well, since the whole parish is to be made up of cousins, I will tell you of a piece of news.—I am going to follow my lord's example, and choose a cousin myself—I could not do anything better?"

"Miss Rosa Delamere, I suppose," said Lord Fortescue; "well, I can return your congratulations in having chosen an amiable and pretty cousin."

"You are quite right," replied Tom; "Rosa and I thought we could not do better—but what made you guess?"

"I always thought you had a predilection for Miss Rosamond in our rambles and excursions last summer, and you surely have not forgotten the drive from Westworth, in the

two-wheeled gig; though I am not usually of a romantic temperament, I fixed on her then as your future choice."

"I assure you I had not given Rosa a thought, then, beyond a little cousinly flirtation—oh, I beg pardon!—but when I went down to the north, after my disappointment at Heatherton, I found Rosa such a staunch admirer of Miss Thornville, that, "Toots"-like, as I could not get the lady I wanted, I chose her friend; and I do not think I have done badly—for Rosa is a capital little girl! only the worst part is, that the Dean, who does not enter into these affairs, does not approve of young ladies marrying before they are of age, and has put a veto on my taking a Mrs. Tom till this birthday takes place, which will not be for another year and a half—and so I am rather done, unless any body can intercede in our favour."

"I will see what I can do; though how you and Rosa will be able to take care

of yourselves, I do not know," said Kate, laughing.

"If we only get the permit, we will manage the rest; the Sherwells want to let their place, and it would be just the very thing for us. Rosa likes the neighbourhood, and, as to me, I do not see how I could tear myself away from so many relations; I shall be all in the fashion, settling there, and marrying a cousin. But, talking of the Sherwells—your old admirer, Katie, the gallant major, has been so nicely taken in; on his voyage to India, he fell in with a fascinating widow, and before they landed, had given her his heart, or rather she had taken it—she let him believe she had lots of money—and it turned out, after they had concluded the thing, and she had taken his name, that she had not a farthing—so that is what flirting Percy has got himself into; my aunt, Mrs. Delamere, knew the lady well, and she is a perfect vixen."

"I never thought that the Major would do anything bright, and yet he was a good-tempered fellow," said Lord Fortescue.

"But a dreadful coxcomb," replied Tom. "Well, he is disposed of; and when, my lord, may I ask, are you going to tie the silken knot?"

"I suppose some time before Christmas," said Lord Fortescue; "I must get off the sick-list first, and then I must have a little beautifying in my house, before I can bring a lady there."

"But still, you are like me, I imagine," replied Tom; "and think the sooner it is done, the better; if any one can bring the Dean round, Katie, it will be you; he admires you above all the ladies that ever lived, from the days of Eve, to the present year. I believe you are his model of what a lady ought to be; and, as he professes to value your opinion, perhaps it will have weight in this case."

"I hope so, Tom, for your sake," replied Kate; "though, I imagine, you will be quite a tie to me—I shall have to divide my time between Staplehurst and Westworth, for I am sure, neither you nor Rosa have an idea of housekeeping."

"Well, Kate—the more we see of you, the better," said Tom; "but I hear Mary calling you."

Kate rose, and Millicent and Emily coming in, put an end to their conversation.

The following morning, as Millicent and Lord Fortescue were about to start for a ramble on the sands, the servant came in to tell Miss Thornville a gentleman was waiting to see her in the drawing-room. Millicent looked at the card that was handed her—the name was 'Sir James Heatherton.' Of course, she was very much surprised, though, after the extraordinary events of the last few months, she said she ought not to wonder at anything.

Millicent immediately went to her visitor,

who was standing by the window, looking out at the sea, but he turned as she came in. Millicent felt a strange, undefinable feeling, in meeting, for the second time, the usurper of her property and home; but in a moment this vanished, as she saw the lines of sorrow and care in his countenance, and the deep band on his hat, which she knew was for his Gracie, whose death she had seen in the paper some time since. Her voice sounded sweet to him, as she began the usual courtesies, and then, delicately and feelingly, condoled with him on his recent loss.

There was a painful quivering of his lips, as he replied—

"Yes, Miss Thornville, my Gracie is taken from me, and I am left bereaved and desolate, and my grey hairs will go down in sorrow to the grave."

He said this with intense bitterness, and Millicent felt tears of sorrow filling her eyes. She was happy, and so was Arthur; but here

was an old man whose grief no human balm could heal, for the shadow of death had heavily darkened his home.

Millicent longed to comfort him, but she did not know what to say, and, after a moment, he continued—

"For weeks I have been tracing you, from Staplehurst to Heatherton, and from Heatherton to Staplehurst; and then I heard that Mrs. Seymour—whom I had the honour of meeting in Florence, and who cheered my sainted child's departing days—was in Paris —thither I journeyed, and found that she had gone, and you with her. I learnt your abode, and here I am come to restore you your property, which I have never ceased to repent having appropriated. I have reason to suppose my lawyers were not quite justified in inducing me to enter into the proceedings which deprived you of the Manor; but, putting that even aside, the estate was yours. It came to you rightfully, if not legally; and

God forgive me, who took it from you. It was my Gracie's dying request, that I should restore it."

"Indeed, Sir James," replied Millicent, who had listened with breathless interest, "I loved my home when I lived there with my beloved parents, but now I have found new friends, and am about to enter into connections which will separate me from Heatherton. No, Sir James, I value your kindness, and my dear cousin Gracie's love for her stranger cousin, but Heatherton can never be mine. You are its rightful owner now, and may I not hope to see you happy in a residence which has belonged for many years to those of your own name and kindred."

"Miss Thornville," he replied, with great emotion, "happiness can never be my portion, a bereaved old man, with no child's voice to soothe his downward path, no fond daughter to bless him ere he dies;—no estate, no riches can soften my sorrow—the house I restore

you, Miss Thornville, is yours, it would possess no charms without the voice of my departed angel."

Millicent was very much affected, she was silent for some time, then in her sweet, soft voice she said :—

"I know how inexpressibly dear your departed daughters were to you, Sir James, and that nothing can compensate for their loss, but could not I, the orphan child of your cousins, supply in some way a part of the dreary void, such a loss must leave? I, too, have known, what it is to lose the best and dearest of earth's joys, I can feel for your sorrow, and though I cannot cheer your solitude with a daughter's undivided love and attention, still, till I enter upon my new life, may I be your solace? and when I leave you, I can say with truth, that it will be Lord Fortescue's privilege, as well as mine, to be a son and daughter to you; we will pass some time at my childhood's home, and you shall visit ours;

we have been bereaved ourselves, and know how to sympathise with those that are in sorrow. Lord Fortescue is ignorant of what I now propose, but he is good and kind, and, Sir James, I know he will be a son to you."

"Then, my Gracie's prayer is answered," he exclaimed; and the elegant, accomplished man of the world—courted by his equals, and flattered by his neighbours—clasped the orphan to his heart, and wept!

And Lord Fortescue, what did he think when Millicent presented him, some time later, to the solitary father, and told him all? Oh, he only loved his Millicent more than ever. She had been his guiding star—she had been Katie's—and henceforward she was the one bright spot in the darkened life of the bowed-down and stricken man, whose children slept in Heaven!

CHAPTER XII.

'But earthly spirit could not tell
The heart of them that loved so well!
True love's the gift which God has given
To man alone beneath the heaven.
* * * * *
It is the secret sympathy,
The silver link, the silken tie,
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,
In body and in soul can bind.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WINTER had set in at Heatherton, and the snows of December fell thick on the beach, and mingled with the ocean's surge; but though the winds blew cold and cutting, and joined with the hoarse roar of the waves that dashed

against the sands, there was joy and happiness at the Manor; for the morrow was to give a sweet and beauteous bride to one on whose brow was stamped the seal of God's love, the nobility of earth, and the nobility of Heaven.

The Manor was full of guests, and so was the little Vicarage; and even old nurse Lucas's cottage had its visitors. Who that could come would willingly be absent at such a time?

Sir James looked a happier man as he sat at the head of his table with his adopted daughter opposite to him, than when he had first sought her at Boulogne; she had become everything to him, she had cheered him and lightened his sorrows, and was leading him to look along the heavenly road, and, in return, it was his delight to make her happy, and he studied her every look and wish; and his lonely sea-side home, became brightened by the sunshine of her sweet presence: he learned also to love the noble youth who visited frequently in that home, and whose

strange connection with Millicent he often wondered at.

And on that marriage eve, there were happy faces around his table; many radiant with youths' brightest hopes, and among them, none were more joyous and hopeful than the simple-hearted Tom Robertson and the lively Rosamond. Not even Kate's persuasions had been able to induce the Dean to alter his resolve, but they had already passed some months of the time of durance, and the year had lost much of its anticipated trial, since Rosamond had received invitations to the Park, the Chase, and the Rectory; and Tom thought they would be able to enjoy each other's society to their heart's content.

There was one thing that made Millicent rejoice very much on that day. Lord Fortescue's prediction, long since forgotten by himself, though not by her, had been actually verified; improbable though it appeared to her then; Mrs. Robertson was actually friendly

with her former governess; Millicent never enquired into the cause of this change, and was too unsuspecting to imagine that she courted her now, merely on account of her future rank. But Clara really was kind and behaved extremely well, she even apologized for all her past behaviour, and her apologies were quite sincere—for Kate and Mr. Seymour's influence had improved Clara very much, every one noticed this, and her father was quite pleased, and Tom ceased teasing her.

A winter sun shone over the snow scene, and its slanting rays fell across the salt-sea waves on that bridal morn; all the village was astir to see their lady married.

Millicent felt nervous and frightened while dressing, at the thought of facing so many people, but Katie cheered her, as she had often before done; and when she joined the bridal party at the old church, she looked as calm and gentle as usual.

Millicent had the same bridesmaids as Katie,

except that Emily Meredith had Bessie Delamere's place, aud they came in the same rotation, and there were the same groomsmen. Mr. and Mrs. Robertson, the Dean, and Mrs. Delamere, and Mrs. Meredith, were among the visitors; Eager was there too, and John, faithful happy John, rejoicing in his lord's wedding-day.

But the friends Millicent loved best, were Sir James, who stood by her side to give his adopted daughter to the one she had chosen, and Katie Seymour, who was near Millicent, and looked as beautiful and happy as it was possible—and Everard, God's faithful minister, who had been the means, humbly and prayerfully, of bringing good to so many there present who had learned to know the Master he himself loved—read the marriage service which united his young cousins; and the gentle Millicent left the chancel, unaltered in spirit but raised in rank, for she was now, after many changes and trials, Millicent Fortescue.

All the villagers cheered her, and said how lovely she looked in her bridal veil and flowers; but Arthur loved her, not only for her personal attractions, but still more for the beauty and goodness of her disposition, and as he was leading her into the vestry, he whispered—

"God be praised, dearest, that He has given you to me at last!"

And Millicent, when she returned to the Manor, prayed that God's blessing might attend her and her husband. She had knelt down, just as she came in, with the white lace hanging over her, and she looked a fit representation of an angel, in her beauty and innocence. A low knock disturbed her—she rose and said—

"Katie, come in."

The friends were folded in each other's arms.

"My dearest Millicent," said Katie; and Millicent whispered—

"Oh Katie, dear Katie, I owe so much of this happiness to you!"

"Not to me, dearest—you must thank God for all that has so wonderfully come to pass."

"I have, dear Kate," she replied.

"Then you have done right, my own sweet cousin."

"No, dear Katie, call me sister; you have filled a sister's part to me, and ours shall be a relationship of love."

The party assembled at the breakfast of course, pronounced the bride 'charming,' and the bridesmaids too came in for a share of admiration. Little Rosa formed plans in her mind about her own wedding, and she rejoiced that the one-and-twentieth birthday was in spring, that she might have flowers to strew her path, and rather more white muslin; and she fancied she should look extremely well in a long veil and a dress with a train, she told all this to Tom when she had an opportunity, and he quite agreed with her, for his thoughts too were occupied with that important day.

Kate helped Millicent again when she went to put on her travelling dress. They only intended to make a short tour, to see some of the cathedral towns, and return soon to the Chase, as both Arthur and his bride longed to begin their home life.

"We shall be very happy, dear Katie," she said, as Mrs. Seymour removed her veil and orange blossom. "I always liked Staplehurst; and, now that it has become so very dear to me, I shall have all my friends around me—and you, dear Kate, the first and dearest. And, my Katie, God has given me such a kind and affectionate husband! Oh, I am, indeed, rich!"

"And you deserve it, dear Millicent," said Kate. "I little thought, when you and Fortescue came to Staplehurst, that everything I wished would turn out so happily and wonderfully as it has now done."

"I thought my lot as a governess was hard then, but now I rejoice; for, had I not been

with you, I should have never known Arthur, nor you, dear Katie. And, when Arthur was dangerously ill in Paris, then I murmured; but had it not been so, he would not have had the attendance of Monsieur Millet; nor would everything have been so beautifully cleared up as it now is. I am glad Doctor Millet was with us today—he looked so happy. I never knew before that he was stopping at the hotel when Arthur was taken ill. He talks of retiring from the army, and coming to England. And, Katie, Arthur has promised the old French *pasteur* to take me to see him in spring, to make up for poor Monsieur Vaubert's disappointment; for he has written to say how much he desires to see Arthur's *fiancée.*"

"*Fiancée* no longer," said Katie, smiling. She had dressed Millicent in a blue cashmere dress, trimmed with swansdown; and when she was quite ready, Kate called Arthur to take Millicent down. But they both delayed a moment, to thank Kate for all her kindness;

and then Millicent had to say good-bye to all.

Sir James was the last to bid her farewell, and he looked quite sad at her departure; but Millicent said—

"This is not farewell, but *au revoir;*" and Arthur added—

"You remember your promise of welcoming us to Horton?"

"Yes," continued Millicent, "we shall meet again very soon."

Sir James stood on the steps, and watched the carriage as long as it was in sight; and when next he saw the young nobleman and his bride, the Staplehurst bells were ringing them joyfully back to Horton.

That Christmas season was a great contrast to the last. The village was quite gay with winter festivities; there were feasts for the poor, and treats for the school-children, in all of which Lord and Lady Fortescue took a prominent part.

Kate was very much liked by her husband's parishioners, and helped him to carry out his plans; and in her leisure moments she was occupied in writing little books for the village children—and so bringing into usefulness her former talent for composition. Kate was very happy in the snug Rectory, with Everard and her little Mary; and old Mrs. Seymour said, she had much more ease and enjoyment now that her dear son was settled, and she had a daughter who cared for her so much.

The Christmas Day was a very joyful one; the bells sounded merrily through the frosty air; and the flag waved from the old church tower. Lord Fortescue and Millicent attended service at Staplehurst; and Millicent thought, as she sat in his pew, of the first time she had entered that church with the Robertsons, and the remembrance seemed like a dream.

The beautiful Christmas hymn sounded sweet that day, and so did the lessons. Millicent listened attentively, as her favourite verse was read—

"And suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

She closed her eyes—the glory and the beauty of the words seemed almost too much, too overpowering—she could almost fancy she heard the angel voices singing in her ears—and longed to take up the burden of the song.

"Glory—oh, yes," she thought—"what else should we sing, but glory to God, who dwells on high? and may peace, such as the world cannot take away, dwell in the hearts of all, this day, and 'good-will towards men.'"

Oh, happy Millicent! she had not then one thought or recollection in her heart, of past unkind treatment; but of her it might be truly said: 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind'—and she had her reward. God showed His love towards her now, by making those who had formerly caused her suffering, to become her friends.

And her husband—how did he feel, as those glorious words were read?—he thought his life should be passed in singing praises —and when the 'Benedictus' was chanted, his voice ascended above the things of earth, as he sang the joyful hymn.

Katie Seymour, in her pew, with little Mary by her side, on a hassock—happy in having 'Mamma's' arm round her—felt tears in her beautiful dark eyes—for she saw glory, peace, and good-will crowning her path. How many Christmas's had she prayed in that church! but none was like this—there was a different feeling now in her heart, for it was animated by love to God, and a glorious hope of immortality!

Millicent took Augustus and Fanny home with her, after the service—she had not forgotten her little pupils, though she was changed in position, and they still remembered her with affection; and, as a Christmas present, they brought her a beautiful miniature

of Katie, set in gold and malachite; it was good Mr. Robertson's suggestion — he had thought over everything that he supposed might please Millicent most, and this seemed to him the most desirable of any—and he was right; and Millicent wore it that evening, together with a miniature of her husband, which he had given her in a bracelet.

There was quite a large party that evening at the Chase—as nearly all those that were at the wedding dined there—and Millicent did the honours of her new home, for the first time, to her happy guests. The house had been very much improved and beautified, though the ancient character had been preserved; at the same time, many modern comforts were added—and the elegant arragement of the rooms, showed that a lady's taste had been displayed; and so it was—for Katie had assisted Lord Fortescue, and suggested many improvements she thought Millicent would like.

Mrs. Meredith had taken her old house at

Westworth again, and she and Emily were among the party. Lord Fortescue had invited Mrs. Bryant—his mother's sister by adoption—to come and stay at the Chase; but she had her home ties at that season. He and Millicent had visited her on their wedding tour, and were very pleased with the old lady; and from her, Lord Fortescue had learnt many interesting particulars of his mother's early life. And, strange enough, an old schoolfellow of Agnes Manvers, who was staying with her at the Park, and was at Lady Fortescue's party, proved to be no other than the young lady whom Millicent had seen at the artist's studio in Paris.

Mr. Seymour never frequented parties where there was dancing, and Lord Fortescue did not care for it; so the amusements of the evening consisted chiefly in music and conversation; and Millicent played several *impromptu* reveries; and she, Katie, and Arthur sang together, as they had done in her governess days.

Mrs. Robertson appeared very pleased with everything, and talked a great deal about "My cousin Lady Fortescue's sweet voice." Tom, who overheard this, was very much amused; for he had been behind the scenes, and could look back a year or so ago; but he kept his reflections to himself, and devoted his attention to Rosa, who was as lively as usual, and seemed to delight in teasing him.

Mr. Robertson walked about the room, looking quite radiant. He was as happy and pleased as any one present, and extremely delighted that "Mamma had become such good friends with Lady Fortescue." He discussed politics with Sir James Heatherton, while Bessie talked *learning* in French to Doctor Millet, who had come to see what an English Christmas resembled. Eager, too, was there, seated in an arm-chair in a quiet corner; for Arthur's happiness would have been incomplete without him.

The elegant Charles Delamere was fast in-

gratiating himself into Agnes Manvers' favour, whom he was teaching to play at chess at a little table quite at the farther end of the drawing-room.

And so the pleasant Christmas passed, and they all separated happy and delighted with each other.

That night, Millicent stood on the raised step in Mrs. Heyward's morning-room, to look out at the stars. She had imbibed the habit of contemplating the heavens from Katie.

The turreted room had been entirely refitted for her, but the picture of Arthur's mother, and hers now—hung in its former place, and the green velvet chair and Japan work-table, were there as of old.

As she stood leaning her forehead against the window and looked up at the clear sky, she heard Lord Fortescue's steps in the passage.

"I wish you would come here, Arthur," she exclaimed; "the stars are so bright, and the moonbeams glisten like diamonds on the snow."

Lord Fortescue came and stood by Millicent, with his arm round her, and she rested her head against his shoulder.

"Is it not beautiful?" she said; "Oh Arthur, I am so happy!"

"This is a joyous season, my Millicent," he replied; "and full of happiness for us."

He looked with her at the clear heavens, and then he said after a pause:—

"Do you know, Millicent, I have been wondering lately how it happened that you and my mother bore the same name. I remember how strange it seemed to me when first we met, for the name and likeness both to agree."

"I have often heard mamma say," she answered; "that 'Millicent,' was a favourite name with her father, and that was the reason she gave it to me; her own was Ellen. I suppose our grandfather retained some fondness for the memory of his first wife, though he never owned her—but, Arthur, I have made

another rather singular discovery, in looking over an old journal of mamma's, yesterday, I found one which mentions your visit to Heatherton."

"Did you?" he exclaimed earnestly.

"Yes. in one date, poor mamma mentions having seen a very sweet-looking lady on the beach, and that papa noticed a great likeness between them.—And further on she mentions their having become acquainted, mamma writes of her as a Mrs. Heyward, come to pass a few weeks at Heatherton, with her little boy, for the benefit of sea air; that she occupied uncomfortable apartments, and then she brought her to the Manor. She mentions that she had rarely seen so sweet a person—it appears from mamma's diary, that you must have remained about ten days at Heatherton—but I find no mention of Mrs. Heyward afterwards."

"How singular that the two sisters should have met without knowing their relationship," said Lord Fortescue; "how happy a sister's

love would have made my sweet mother;—but, dear Millicent, since I have had you near me, I have no longer regrets respecting my dear mother; not, that I love her memory less—that could never be—but the feeling of loneliness which the recollection of her love sometimes gave me, is now forgotten in the real, living love of you—my sweet wife!"

"I wonder, Arthur," said Millicent, gently, "if your mother's spirit can see and watch us now from the skies?"

"If she can, how she must rejoice at her children's happiness!—but I think, Millicent, this is rather a visionary idea; though ever since her death it has been my delight to act under this belief."

As Lord Fortescue spoke, they both left the window, and stood before Mrs. Heyward's picture.

"How gentle and patient she looks," said Millicent; "dear Arthur, I should like to be as good as your mother was."

"And so you are, my Millicent," he replied; "but my sainted mother's life was one of suffering; and my angel wife will, I hope, with God's blessing, lead a life of happiness!"

He lowered his voice with great reverence in his tone as he said—

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee, from this time forth and for evermore!"

And her husband's prayer was answered: they were blessed and preserved from harm, and their lives were simple and holy; and, as Everard and Kate were loved among the villagers for their benevolence, so Arthur and Millicent were known in the neighbourhood as "the good Lord and Lady Fortescue."

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